

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

First Phase

By the same author

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THE SECOND WORLD WAR

First Phase

by

DUFF COOPER



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P R E F A C E

WRITTEN history is of two kinds — the raw material and the finished product. The raw material is the stuff that is turned out while the events are happening — speeches, articles, diaries, correspondence of all kinds, from the dispatches of ambassadors to the private letters of friends. Upon this mass of material the historian descends. Part of it he accepts, part he rejects. He finds there many contradictions. Some have deliberately written what is false, others, misled by prejudice, have honestly blundered. Subsequent events will have helped to distinguish the truth from the falsehood. The further the historian is removed from his subject the more scientific will be his approach to it, the cooler his judgment. But what he gains in detachment he loses in atmosphere. The longer the flesh has left the bones the harder it becomes to make it grow on them again in the likeness of life.

This volume is concerned with some of the events of the last twelve months. It was suggested to me that I should write a history of that period. To do so at present would be impossible because the raw material of such a history is not available. A subaltern engaged in one corner of the field cannot describe a battle that is still in progress.

Therefore since I cannot write a history I have thought well to publish some original documents, speeches and articles, which may at least serve the historian when he comes to his task as evidence of how it struck a contemporary.

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The value of such evidence must largely depend upon how far it is selective and how far it is complete. If I had selected from my speeches and articles of the last year only those which pleased me most in retrospect I should have failed even to present an accurate picture of what had taken place in the mind of one individual. If I had altered anything I should not only have failed but have falsified. For this reason I have reprinted every article that I have written during this period, nor have I altered a word except to correct a misprint. I have not however inflicted on the reader all my speeches because the majority of them have never been written down, and some of those in the House of Commons, where the record of Hansard remains, are of no general interest, such as those on the Army and Navy estimates. Where I have quoted a speech I have given the whole of it, as it was reported at the time.

The producer of the finished article has another great advantage over the purveyor of the raw material — he can select his period and assign to it a beginning and an end. History, it has been said, is a tragedy upon which the curtain is ever about to fall, and a book like the present must suffer in consequence, because it deals with a problem that remains unsolved; it tells a story of which the end is not yet.

There is one other weakness in this volume which the reader may remark and of which the author is aware. It contains several repetitions which have been unavoidable owing to the system upon which it is planned. But my excuse for saying the same thing more than once is that I have been meaning the same thing all the time. I have meant to convince my countrymen that we are at war

with the most formidable adversary that we have ever faced. That the agreement of Munich was a defeat in that war and that we could only retrieve it by reorganizing our fighting forces on a new scale. I believed that such reorganization must demand the introduction of the compulsory principle, beginning with a national register and ending with conscription. I urged that we should seek the friendship of Russia and the support of the smaller European Powers. I hoped that in view of the magnitude of the task that lay before us it might prove possible to sink party differences and to form a truly National Government on a broader basis. I felt sure that the only way to prevent the bloodless struggle from deteriorating into a bloody one was to present the Powers of aggression with the spectacle of sufficient armed force to persuade them that they could not prevail against it.

These few sentences form the theme of all that follows. The more important of my suggestions have been adopted by the Government, but always long after they were made. Their efficacy has therefore been diminished. Looking back upon the last twelve months it is impossible to deny that it has been a tragic year of successful aggression unforeseen, of decisions too long postponed, of chances missed.

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CHAPTER I

RESIGNATION

ON the last day of September 1938 the Prime Minister of Great Britain returned to London from Munich having concluded an agreement there which he hoped would form the basis of a lasting peace. It was a wet evening but he was received like a conquering hero and his journey from the aerodrome to Whitehall was a triumphal progress. At Downing Street friends and colleagues were profuse in their congratulations. Even within the Cabinet no note of query or criticism was raised. Mr. Chamberlain was very tired after two long days of work and travel at the end of a month of unrelenting anxiety and labour carried on under such a burden of responsibility as few men have ever borne. It was in these circumstances and in the presence of my colleagues that I felt it my duty to offer him my resignation. It was not an easy or a pleasant task. After a very brief discussion he said, with that quick, unexpected smile which so lights up his face, that the matter was one which he and I could settle later between ourselves, and the Cabinet dispersed.

As I walked back with one of my colleagues across the Horse Guards Parade to Admiralty House, some lingering remnant of that enthusiastic crowd recognized us and gave us a cheer, which I at least had not merited.

The following morning I called on the Prime Minister



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and repeated my offer. He had no hesitation in accepting it. He felt as I did that I had long been out of harmony with the direction of foreign policy, and that I was likely to continue to be so. We were in complete agreement that I was taking the right course. I was not with him for more than ten minutes. We separated, as I hope we have remained, friends.

That afternoon — it was Saturday — I took leave of His Majesty and went into the country for the week end.

The House of Commons met on Monday. Again my task was not an easy one. Support for the Prime Minister had never been more enthusiastic. Ministerialists rose in their places when he entered the Chamber and cheered. Some members of the Labour Party, such as Mr. Lansbury, openly approved of the line he had taken at Munich and there were many who privately shared Mr. Lansbury's view. The unanimous verdict of the Independent Labour Party was also favourable. Members of all parties whatever their opinions were eager to hear his statement, but by the custom of the House I was compelled to speak first.

I said:

'The House will, I am sure, appreciate the peculiarly difficult circumstances in which I am speaking this afternoon. It is always a painful and delicate task for a Minister who has resigned to explain his reasons to the House of Commons, and my difficulties are increased this afternoon by the fact, of which I am well aware, that the majority of the House are most anxious to hear the Prime Minister and that I am standing between them and him. But I shall have, I am afraid, to ask for the patience of the House, because I have taken a very

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important, for me, and difficult decision, and I feel that I shall have to demand a certain amount of time in which to make plain to the House the reasons for which I have taken it.

‘At the last Cabinet meeting that I attended, last Friday evening, before I succeeded in finding my way to No. 10 Downing Street, I was caught up in the large crowd that were demonstrating their enthusiasm and were cheering, laughing, and singing; and there is no greater feeling of loneliness than to be in a crowd of happy, cheerful people and to feel that there is no occasion in oneself for gaiety or for cheering. That there was every cause for relief I was deeply aware, as much as anybody in this country, but that there was great cause for self-congratulation I was uncertain. Later, when I stood in the hall at Downing Street, again among enthusiastic throngs of friends and colleagues who were all as cheerful, happy, glad and enthusiastic as the crowd in the street, and when I heard the Prime Minister from the window above saying that he had returned, like Lord Beaconsfield, with “peace with honour”, claiming that it was peace for our time, once again I felt lonely and isolated; and when later, in the Cabinet room, all his other colleagues were able to present him with bouquets, it was an extremely painful and bitter moment for me that all that I could offer him was my resignation.

‘Before taking such a step as I have taken, on a question of international policy, a Minister must ask himself many questions, not the least important of which is this: Can my resignation at the present time do any material harm to His Majesty’s Government; can it

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weaken our position; can it suggest to our critics that there is not a united front in Great Britain? Now I would not have flattered myself that my resignation was of great importance, and I did feel confident that so small a blow could easily be borne at the present time, when I think that the Prime Minister is more popular than he has ever been at any period; but had I had any doubts with regard to that facet of the problem, they would have been set at rest, I must say, by the way in which my resignation was accepted, not, I think, with reluctance, but really with relief.

‘I have always been a student of foreign politics. I have served ten years in the Foreign Office, and I have studied the history of this and of other countries, and I have always believed that one of the most important principles in foreign policy and the conduct of foreign policy should be to make your policy plain to other countries, to let them know where you stand and what in certain circumstances you are prepared to do. I remember so well in 1914 meeting a friend, just after the declaration of war, who had come back from the British Embassy in Berlin, and asking him whether it was the case, as I had seen it reported in the papers, that the Berlin crowd had behaved very badly and had smashed all the windows of the Embassy, and that the military had had to be called out in order to protect them. I remember my friend telling me that, in his opinion and in that of the majority of the staff, the Berlin crowd were not to blame, that the members of the British Embassy staff had great sympathy with the feelings of the populace because, they said, “These people have never thought that there was a chance of our coming into the war”.

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They were assured by their Government — and the Government themselves perhaps believed it — that Britain would remain neutral, and therefore it came to them as a shock when, having already been engaged with other enemies, as they were, they found that Great Britain had turned against them.

‘I thought then, and I have always felt, that in any other international crisis that should occur our first duty was to make it plain exactly where we stood and what we would do. I believe that the great defect in our foreign policy during recent months and recent weeks has been that we have failed to do so. During the last four weeks we have been drifting, day by day, nearer into war with Germany, and we have never said, until the last moment, and then in most uncertain terms, that we were prepared to fight. We knew that information to the opposite effect was being poured into the ears of the head of the German State. He had been assured, reassured, and fortified in the opinion that in no case would Great Britain fight.

‘When Ministers met at the end of August on their return from a holiday there was an enormous accumulation of information from all parts of the world, the ordinary information from our diplomatic representatives, also secret and less reliable information from other sources, information from Members of Parliament who had been travelling on the Continent and who had felt it their duty to write to their friends in the Cabinet and give them first-hand information which they had received from good sources. I myself had been travelling in Scandinavia and in the Baltic States, and with regard to all this information — Europe was very full of rumours

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at that time — it was quite extraordinary the unanimity with which it pointed to one conclusion and with which all sources suggested that there was one remedy. All information pointed to the fact that Germany was preparing for war at the end of September, and all recommendations agreed that the one way in which it could be prevented was by Great Britain making a firm stand and stating that she would be in that war, and would be upon the other side.

‘I had urged even earlier, after the rape of Austria, that Great Britain should make a firm declaration of what her foreign policy was, and then and later I was met with this, that the people of this country are not prepared to fight for Czechoslovakia. That is perfectly true, but I tried to represent another aspect of the situation, that it was not for Czechoslovakia that we should have to fight, that it was not for Czechoslovakia that we should have been fighting if we had gone to war last week. God knows how thankful we all are to have avoided it, but we also know that the people of this country were prepared for it — resolute, prepared, and grimly determined. It was not for Serbia that we fought in 1914. It was not even for Belgium, although it occasionally suited some people to say so. We were fighting then, as we should have been fighting last week, in order that one great Power should not be allowed, in disregard of treaty obligations, of the laws of nations and the decrees of morality, to dominate by brutal force the Continent of Europe. For that principle we fought against Napoleon Buonaparte, and against Louis XIV of France and Philip II of Spain. For that principle we must ever be prepared to fight, for on the day when we are not pre-

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pared to fight for it we must forfeit our Empire, our liberties and our independence.

‘I besought my colleagues not to see this problem always in terms of Czechoslovakia, not to review it always from the difficult strategic position of that small country, but rather to say to themselves, “A moment may come when, owing to the invasion of Czechoslovakia, a European war will begin, and when that moment comes we must take part in that war, we cannot keep out of it, and there is no doubt upon which side we shall fight. Let the world know that and it will give those who are prepared to disturb the peace reason to hold their hand”’. It is perfectly true that after the assault on Austria the Prime Minister made a speech in this House — an excellent speech with every word of which I was in complete agreement — and what he said then was repeated and supported by the Chancellor of the Exchequer at Lanark. It was, however, a guarded statement. It was a statement to the effect that if there were such a war it would be unwise for anybody to count upon the possibility of our staying out.

‘That is not the language which the dictators understand. Together with new methods and a new morality they have introduced also a new vocabulary into Europe. They have discarded the old diplomatic methods of correspondence. Is it not significant that during the whole of this crisis there has not been a German Ambassador in London and, so far as I am aware, the German Chargé d’Affaires has hardly visited the Foreign Office? They talk a new language, the language of the headlines of the tabloid Press, and such guarded diplomatic and reserved utterances as were made by the Prime Minister and the

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Chancellor of the Exchequer mean nothing to the mentality of Herr Hitler or Signor Mussolini. I had hoped that it might be possible to make a statement to Herr Hitler before he made his speech at Nuremberg. On all sides we were being urged to do so by people in this country, by Members of this House, by Leaders of the Opposition, by the Press, by the heads of foreign States, even by Germans who were supporters of the regime and did not wish to see it plunged into a war which might destroy it. But we were always told that on no account must we irritate Herr Hitler; it was particularly dangerous to irritate him before he made a public speech, because if he were so irritated he might say some terrible things from which afterwards there would be no retreat. It seems to me that Herr Hitler never makes a speech save under the influence of considerable irritation, and the addition of one more irritant would not, I should have thought, have made a great difference, whereas the communication of a solemn fact would have produced a sobering effect.

'After the chance of Nuremberg was missed I had hoped that the Prime Minister at his first interview with Herr Hitler at Berchtesgaden would make the position plain, but he did not do so. Again, at Godesberg I had hoped that that statement would be made in unequivocal language. Again I was disappointed. Hitler had another speech to make in Berlin. Again an opportunity occurred of telling him exactly where we stood before he made that speech, but again the opportunity was missed, and it was only after the speech that he was informed. He was informed through the mouth of a distinguished English civil servant that in certain conditions we were

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prepared to fight. We know what the mentality or something of the mentality of that great dictator is. We know that a message delivered strictly according to instructions with at least three qualifying clauses was not likely to produce upon him on the morning after his great oration the effect that was desired. Honestly, I did not believe that he thought there was anything of importance in that message. It certainly produced no effect whatever upon him and we can hardly blame him.

‘Then came the last appeal from the Prime Minister on Wednesday morning. For the first time from the beginning to the end of the four weeks of negotiations Herr Hitler was prepared to yield an inch, an ell perhaps, but to yield some measure to the representations of Great Britain. But I would remind the House that the message from the Prime Minister was not the first news that he had received that morning. At dawn he had learned of the mobilization of the British Fleet. It is impossible to know what are the motives of man and we shall probably never be satisfied as to which of these two sources of inspiration moved him most when he agreed to go to Munich, but we do know that never before had he given in and that then he did. I had been urging the mobilization of the Fleet for many days. I had thought that this was the kind of language which would be easier for Herr Hitler to understand than the guarded language of diplomacy or the conditional clauses of the Civil Service. I had urged that something in that direction might be done at the end of August and before the Prime Minister went to Berchtesgaden. I had suggested that it should accompany the mission of Sir Horace Wilson. I remember the Prime Minister stating it was the one thing

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that would ruin that mission, and I said it was the one thing that would lead it to success. ✓

‘That is the deep difference between the Prime Minister and myself throughout these days. The Prime Minister has believed in addressing Herr Hitler through the language of sweet reasonableness. I have believed that he was more open to the language of the mailed fist. I am glad so many people think that sweet reasonableness has prevailed, but what actually did it accomplish? The Prime Minister went to Berchtesgaden with many excellent and reasonable proposals and alternatives to put before the Führer, prepared to argue and negotiate, as anybody would have gone to such a meeting. He was met by an ultimatum. So far as I am aware no suggestion of an alternative was ever put forward. Once the Prime Minister found himself in the atmosphere of Berchtesgaden and face to face with the personality of Hitler he knew perfectly well, being a good judge of men, that it would be a waste of time to put forward any alternative suggestion. So he returned to us with those proposals, wrapped up in a cloak called “Self-determination”, and laid them before the Cabinet. They meant the partition of a country, the cession of territory, they meant what, when it was suggested by a newspaper some weeks or days before, had been indignantly repudiated throughout the country.

‘After long deliberation the Cabinet decided to accept that ultimatum, and I was one of those who agreed in that decision. I felt all the difficulty of it; but I foresaw also the danger of refusal. I saw that if we were obliged to go to war it would be hard to have it said against us that we were fighting against the principle of self-determination,

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and I hoped that if a postponement could be reached by this compromise there was a possibility that the final disaster might be permanently avoided. It was not a pleasant task to impose upon the Government of Czechoslovakia so grievous a hurt to their country, no pleasant or easy task for those upon whose support the Government of Czechoslovakia had relied to have to come to her and say "You have got to give up all for which you were prepared to fight"; but, still, she accepted those terms. The Government of Czechoslovakia, filled with deep misgiving, and with great regret, accepted the harsh terms that were proposed to her.

'That was all that we had got by sweet reasonableness at Berchtesgaden. Well, I did think that when a country had agreed to be partitioned, when the Government of a country had agreed to split up the ancient Kingdom of Bohemia, which has existed behind its original frontier for more than a thousand years, that was the ultimate demand that would be made upon it, and that after everything which Herr Hitler had asked for in the first instance had been conceded he would be willing, and we should insist, that the method of transfer of those territories should be conducted in a normal, in a civilized, manner, as such transfers have always been conducted in the past.

'The Prime Minister made a second visit to Germany, and at Godesberg he was received with flags, bands, trumpets and all the panoply of Nazi parade; but he returned again with nothing but an ultimatum. Sweet reasonableness had won nothing except terms which a cruel and revengeful enemy would have dictated to a beaten foe after a long war. Crueller terms could hardly be devised than those of the Godesberg ultimatum. The

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moment I saw them I said to myself, "If these are accepted it will be the end of all decency in the conduct of public affairs in the world". We had a long and anxious discussion in the Cabinet with regard to the acceptance or rejection of those terms. It was decided to reject them, and that information, also, was conveyed to the German Government. Then we were face to face with an impossible position, and at the last moment — not quite the last moment, but what seemed the last moment — another effort was made, by the dispatch of an emissary to Herr Hitler with suggestions for a last appeal. That emissary's effort was in vain, and it was only, as the House knows, on that fateful Wednesday morning that the final change of policy was adopted. I believe that change of policy, as I have said, was due not to any argument that had been addressed to Herr Hitler — it has never been suggested that it was — but due to the fact that for the first moment he realized, when the Fleet was mobilized, that what his advisers had been assuring him of for weeks and months was untrue and that the British people were prepared to fight in a great cause.

'So, last of all, he came to Munich, and terms, of which the House is now aware, were devised at Munich, and those were the terms upon which this transfer of territory is to be carried out. The Prime Minister will shortly be explaining to the House the particulars in which the Munich terms differ from the Godesberg ultimatum. There are great and important differences, and it is a great triumph for the Prime Minister that he was able to acquire them. I spent the greater part of Friday trying to persuade myself that those terms were good enough for me. I tried to swallow them — I did not want to do

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what I have done — but they stuck in my throat, because it seemed to me that although the modifications which the Prime Minister obtained were important and of great value — the House will realize how great the value is when the Prime Minister has developed them — that still there remained the fact that that country was to be invaded, and I had thought that after accepting the humiliation of partition she should have been spared the ignominy and the horror of invasion. If anybody doubts that she is now suffering from the full horror of invasion they have only to read an article published in the *Daily Telegraph* this morning, which will convince them. After all, when Naboth had agreed to give up his vineyard he should have been allowed to pack up his goods and depart in peace, but the German Government, having got their man down, were not to be deprived of the pleasure of kicking him. Invasion remained; even the date of invasion remained unaltered. The date laid down by Herr Hitler was not to be changed. There are five stages, but those stages are almost as rapid as an army can move. Invasion and the date remained the same. Therefore, the works, fortifications and gun emplacements upon which that poor country had spent an enormous amount of its wealth were to be handed over intact. Just as the German was not to be deprived of the pleasure of kicking a man when he was down, so the army was not to be robbed of its loot. That was another term in the ultimatum which I found it impossible to accept. That was why I failed to bring myself to swallow the terms that were proposed — although I recognized the great service that the Prime Minister had performed in obtaining very material changes in them which would result in great

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benefit and a great lessening of the sufferings of the people of Czechoslovakia.

"Then he brought home also from Munich something more than the terms to which we had agreed. At the last moment, at the farewell meeting, he signed with the Führer a joint declaration. (An Hon. Member: "Secret".) I do not think there was anything secret about the declaration. The joint declaration has been published to the world. I saw no harm, no great harm and no very obvious harm, in the terms of that declaration, but I would suggest that for the Prime Minister of England to sign, without consulting with his colleagues and without, so far as I am aware, any reference to his Allies, obviously without any communication with the Dominions and without the assistance of any expert diplomatic advisers, such a declaration with the dictator of a great State, is not the way in which the foreign affairs of the British Empire should be conducted.

"There is another aspect of this joint declaration. After all, what does it say? That Great Britain and Germany will not go to war in future and that everything will be settled by negotiation. Was it ever our intention to go to war? Was it ever our intention not to settle things by communication and counsel? There is a danger. We must remember that this is not all that we are left with as the result of what has happened during the last few weeks. We are left, and we must all acknowledge it, with a loss of esteem on the part of countries that trusted us. We are left also with a tremendous commitment. For the first time in our history we have committed ourselves to defend a frontier in Central Europe.

"We are left with the additional serious commitment

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that we are guaranteeing a frontier that we have at the same time destroyed. We have taken away the defences of Czechoslovakia in the same breath as we have guaranteed them, as though you were to deal a man a mortal blow and at the same time insure his life. I was in favour of giving this commitment. I felt that as we had taken so much away we must, in honour, give something in return, but I realized what the commitment meant. It meant giving a commitment to defend a frontier in Central Europe, a difficult frontier to defend because it is surrounded on all sides by enemies. I realized that giving this commitment must mean for ourselves a tremendous quickening-up of our rearmament schemes on an entirely new basis, a far broader basis upon which they must be carried out in future.

‘I had always been in favour of maintaining an army that could take a serious part in continental war. I am afraid I differed from the Prime Minister, when I was at the War Office and he was at the Treasury two years ago or more, on this point, but if we are now committed to defend a frontier in Central Europe, it is in my opinion absolutely imperative that we should maintain an army upon something like a continental basis. It is no secret that the attitude maintained by this Government during recent weeks would have been far stiffer had our defences been far stronger. It has been said that we shall necessarily now increase both the speed at which they are reconditioned and the scale upon which they are reconditioned, but how are we to justify the extra burden laid upon the people of Great Britain if we are told at the same time that there is no fear of war with Germany and that, in the opinion of the Prime Minister, this settlement

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means peace in our time? That is one of the most profoundly disquieting aspects of the situation.

"The Prime Minister has confidence in the good will and in the word of Herr Hitler, although when Herr Hitler broke the Treaty of Versailles he undertook to keep the Treaty of Locarno, and when he broke the Treaty of Locarno he undertook not to interfere further, or to have further territorial aims, in Europe. When he entered Austria by force he authorized his henchmen to give an authoritative assurance that he would not interfere with Czechoslovakia. That was less than six months ago. Still the Prime Minister believes that he can rely upon the good faith of Hitler; he believes that Hitler is interested only in Germans, as the Prime Minister was assured. Well, there are Germans in other countries. There are Germans in Switzerland, in Denmark and in Alsace; I think that one of the only countries in Europe in which there are no Germans is Spain and yet there are rumours that Germany has taken an interest in that country. But the Prime Minister believed — and he has the advantage over us, or over most of us, that he has met the man — that he can come to a reasonable settlement of all outstanding questions between us. Herr Hitler said that he has got to have some settlement about colonies, but he said that this will never be a question of war. The Prime Minister attaches considerable importance to those words, but what do they mean? Do they mean that Herr Hitler will take "No" for an answer? He has never taken it yet. Or do they mean that he believes that he will get away with this, as he has got away with everything else, without fighting, by well-timed bluff, bluster and blackmail? Otherwise it means very little.

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'The Prime Minister may be right. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, with the deepest sincerity, that I hope and pray that he is right, but I cannot believe what he believes. I wish I could. Therefore, I can be of no assistance to him in his Government. I should be only a hindrance, and it is much better that I should go. I remember when we were discussing the Godesberg ultimatum that I said that if I were a party to persuading, or even to suggesting to, the Czechoslovak Government that they should accept that ultimatum, I should never be able to hold up my head again. I have forfeited a great deal. I have given up an office that I loved, work in which I was deeply interested and a staff of which any man might be proud. I have given up association in that work with my colleagues with whom I have maintained for many years the most harmonious relations, not only as colleagues but as friends. I have given up the privilege of serving as lieutenant to a leader whom I still regard with the deepest admiration and affection. I have ruined, perhaps, my political career. But that is a little matter; I have retained something which is to me of greater value — I can still walk about the world with my head erect.'

Reading this speech in the light of subsequent events, I am bound to admit that my reference to the difference between the terms of Munich and the terms of Godesberg was too optimistic. I was anxious however to be scrupulously fair to the Prime Minister and to give him full credit for what he had achieved. Therefore I said that the differences between the two sets of terms were 'great and important'. Ten days later it was admitted in *The Times* that the Munich terms had in point of fact worked

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out worse for the Czechs in many respects than the terms of Godesberg.

The Prime Minister spoke immediately after me and prefaced his remarks by saying:

'It has been my lot to listen to more than one speech by a Minister who came to this House to explain the reasons why he had felt it necessary to resign his office in the Government. I have never been able to listen to such speeches without emotion. When a man gives up, as my Right Hon. Friend has so eloquently described, a great position, and association with friends in the pursuit of work in which he takes a pride and interest, and gives up these things for conscience' sake, everybody must listen to him with respect. One must feel, too, sympathy for a man struggling to explain the reasons which have separated him from his colleagues, conscious that among them at any rate he has been in a minority. But I am sure my Right Hon. Friend will not think me discourteous if this afternoon I make no attempt to answer him or to defend myself against the strictures which he has made upon the policy which the Government have been pursuing. It is not that I have anything to withdraw or to regret, but that in the course of this debate there will be, no doubt, other criticisms which can be answered before the debate closes, along with those of my Right Hon. Friend, and that I desire to open the discussion with the speech that I would have made if my Right Hon. Friend had not resigned, in order that I may try and give the House the background, as we see it, for the events that have taken place and for the decisions that have been taken.'

It will be noticed that the Prime Minister very properly

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excused himself from answering the speech that I had made and suggested that the opportunity to answer it would arise later. The debate continued for four days and five members of the Government took part in it. No attempt was made in any of the speeches to answer a single point that I had made. The Home Secretary suggested that I had advocated presenting Herr Hitler with a public ultimatum at an early stage in the negotiations. I had to interrupt him in order to point out that I had never suggested anything of the kind. The Prime Minister himself spoke again at the close of the debate but he made no further reference to my speech.

On the following Sunday Herr Hitler delivered his first public speech since the meeting at Munich. Many people had hoped that it would reveal a friendly attitude towards Great Britain, would pay a tribute to the pacific role played by Mr. Chamberlain and would echo the hopes that he had expressed in the House of Commons for a peaceful future and an approach to disarmament.

The speech however proved of a very different character. It was violent and aggressive and contained a bitter personal attack on Mr. Winston Churchill, Mr. Eden and myself. For the head of a friendly foreign state to calumniate by name three private members of Parliament is probably without precedent in European history. It seemed that Herr Hitler, intoxicated by the triumph of Munich, believed for the moment that he could dictate to the people of Great Britain as he could to the people of Czechoslovakia who might and who might not be permitted to sit in Cabinet. 'I am fully aware,' he said, 'that if one day the place of Chamberlain were taken by such men as Eden, Duff Cooper or Churchill their aim

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would be to unleash at once a new world war against Germany.'

I had already undertaken to write a weekly article in the *Evening Standard*. This attack seemed to provide a suitable subject for the first one which appeared on the Tuesday after Herr Hitler's Sunday speech.

'The Chancellor of the German Reich stated on Sunday that there were certain people in England who desired war, and he mentioned my name as being one of them. So grave an accusation coming from so high a quarter demands an answer in language more measured and temperate than that in which it was delivered. There is nobody in this country who desires war. Let that be an axiom of discussion. That Herr Hitler should believe otherwise is the more surprising seeing that he has ever at his elbow as his most trusted adviser, Herr von Ribbentrop, who was recently Ambassador at the Court of St. James's and had, therefore, every opportunity of forming an accurate estimate of public opinion.

'How best to prevent war in existing circumstances is the only question which is agitating the minds of our countrymen.

'There are some who believe that the simplest method is refusal to fight. But what sounds simple in theory is seldom easy in practice, and the first thing that the school-boy discovers is that if he wishes to live in peace with his neighbours he must not allow it to be supposed that in no circumstances will he resort to force.

'It is not the small and weak who are bullied at school or it was not so in my day, for I was one of them — it is those who lack the spirit of resistance, without which in this world, as we have made it, nothing can survive.

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'It may be argued that the Quakers enjoy a peaceful and prosperous existence, but the Quakers have renounced nothing except resort to physical violence and they are living in a civilized community where physical violence is against the law. The whole police force and the Courts of Law are on their side. If a colony of Quakers were planted among the tribes of Central Africa their survival would be problematical.

'In international affairs there is no police force and no court of law. Those who hoped, as I did, that the League of Nations might supply these deficiencies have been disappointed.

'The nations are living under the law of the jungle, where the doctrine of peace at any price means paying the price of shame and not getting peace in return for it, and where non-resistance means self-destruction.

'Yet there are many people to-day who, having been subjected to twenty years of intensive anti-war propaganda, are almost unconsciously sinking into acceptance of the doctrine of peace at any price, without fully realizing that it is the doctrine of despair.

'It was interesting to watch a majority of the House of Commons last week applauding the extremist forms of pacifism as preached to them with the unfailing charm and eloquence of Mr. Maxton.

'They did not perceive whither his argument was conducting them: for he is logical and they were not. He knows that a man who is living in the jungle and has many possessions which his neighbours envy, cannot hope to retain them unless he is prepared to defend them by force.

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'When, therefore, he gently explained to his new supporters the inevitable conclusion of his argument, namely that Great Britain must abandon her Empire, they looked as crestfallen as a lot of children who have suddenly tasted the powder in the jam.

'There was very little argument in the four days' debate. Speaker after speaker harped upon one theme. "Last week we were in danger of war. To-day we are safe. What does anything else matter? Let us thank God and the Prime Minister." Then there usually followed a vivid description of the horrors of war, which are easy to describe, and difficult to exaggerate.

'But the horrors of war form no justification in ethics for the adoption of a policy that is wrong any more than the horrors of martyrdom justify a denial of faith. And in politics the desire to avert war no more justifies the adoption of a policy that is foolish than the desire to avoid death from thirst proves the wisdom of a stranded mariner who drinks salt water. Wrong-doing is sometimes punished in this world, and folly nearly always.

'We may then surely assume, we who are accused of wanting war, that refusal to fight is not the way to avoid it. What other alternatives remain to us? The most obvious is the determination to settle all outstanding disputes by peaceful negotiation. But can we feel any confidence that this system will ever be sincerely accepted by the Nazi regime in Germany?

'There have been so many opportunities for negotiation in the past, and they have all been neglected. The fault was not ours. We were willing to negotiate with a defeated and a still weak Germany, as we proved at

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Locarno. Have we ever refused the proffered hand or risen first from the Council table?

'Germany might have negotiated before she repudiated the League of Nations, before she declared conscription, before she marched into the Rhineland, before she invaded Austria.

'But on each occasion she preferred the policy of swift action. When after the march into the Rhineland we showed ourselves willing to negotiate, and sent a carefully worded Note to the German Government containing a number of questions, in order to clear the ground, we never received the common civility of a reply. Yet it is we who, in the opinion of Herr Hitler, desire war.

'He might have shown himself willing to negotiate at Berchtesgaden or at Godesberg, but all our Prime Minister received on each occasion as a reward for his journeys was the privilege of being the bearer of an ultimatum.

'There was negotiation at Munich, but what kind of negotiation was that? It took place under the mouths of the cannon and to the accompaniment of the marching tread of a million and a half armed men. It had to be concluded before dawn, for the troops were due to cross the frontier on the morrow. And cross the frontier they did, according to plan.

'How much was achieved there in modification of the original ultimatum may well be a question for argument, but there are very few of those who vociferously cheered for "Peace with Honour" who could explain how the glorious agreement of Munich differed from the unacceptable terms propounded at Godesberg.

'Surely in light of all these recent historical facts we

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cannot be accused of wanting war if we begin to despair of settling our differences with Germany by peaceful negotiation?

‘Where, then, does safety lie? What hope remains?’

‘Ever since Nazidom was established in Germany with its extravagant ambitions and its reliance upon force as the means of accomplishing them, I have felt the urgency of deciding upon a line beyond which we will not retreat.

‘In justice to Germany we should let the people of that country know that there is a limit set to the patience of democracies no less than to that of dictators.

‘Germany should never be allowed to make again the mistake that she made in 1914 in believing that Great Britain would not fight; nor should she be allowed, in that belief, to advance into a position from which she cannot retreat.

‘I would, therefore, suggest that the time has come when, instead of waiting for fresh demands to be made of us, we should state firmly where we stand.

‘If we are prepared to make further concessions we should inform Germany what those concessions are and accompany such information with an assurance that when those concessions have been made the limit will have been reached.

‘Beyond that limit we cannot and will not go. Upon that line, wherever it may be drawn, the British Empire will stand fast.

‘Let Germany know that. It is the best service that we can render to the cause of peace.’

The suggestion contained in the concluding paragraphs of this article to the effect that we should clarify

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in our own minds and then make plain to the world our position and our policy and that we should demand a reciprocal statement from Germany was not acted upon, with the result that within six months we were compelled to stand by and regard with impotent indignation further unprovoked and successful acts of aggression.

CHAPTER II

REFORM

WHEN I spoke in the House of Commons on October 3rd, I laid stress upon the new military commitments which the policy of Munich had imposed upon Great Britain. While I expressed doubts as to the efficacy of the guarantee that had been given to Czechoslovakia, comparing it to insuring a man's life to whom simultaneously a mortal blow had been dealt, I nevertheless insisted that some steps should be taken to show our sincerity with regard to the guarantee and that such steps should be in the direction of preparing an army for Continental warfare.

During the eighteen months that I held the position of Secretary of State for War I had been in continual disagreement with Mr. Chamberlain, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, concerning the size of our land forces. During the years that preceded Great Britain's decision to rearm, Mr. Chamberlain had accomplished a great task at the Treasury. He had entirely restored the finances of the country from the desperate condition into which they had declined, and he had every reason to look forward to conferring upon the population those benefits — remission of taxation and improved social services — which a period of strict economy and wise administration had made possible. It was therefore not unnatural that while acquiescing in the policy of rearmament, he should have regarded it as the frustration of his hopes and should

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have endeavoured to save what was possible from the wreck.

When he was presented with what appeared in 1935 a stupendous estimate for rearmament — figures which have since been multiplied four and five times — he not unnaturally sought for an item on which economy could be effected. The Navy must always come first when Britain's defences are being considered, and the urgent need of rebuilding the Fleet in face of the new German challenge could not be questioned. The insufficiency of our Air Force was already in 1935 disturbing the public mind and had formed the subject of acrimonious debate in the House of Commons. The Army, therefore, seemed the only branch of the services where the estimates prepared by the Chiefs of Staff, with the assistance of Foreign Office and Treasury representatives, could possibly undergo a reduction.

Not only was there present to Mr. Chamberlain's mind the natural and very proper desire of any Chancellor of the Exchequer to save money, but also, I think, he had listened to the theory that has been widely held at various times by many whose opinions deserve respect, that Great Britain's contribution to a world war can be, and should be, limited to naval and air forces. The theory is an old one and it received reinforcement from what I personally believe to be a misunderstanding of the lesson of the last war. Many people, shocked by the casualties suffered on the Somme and at Passchendaele, came to believe that those great sacrifices were wasted and were thus led to the conclusion that Great Britain ought never again to take part on a large scale in Continental warfare. Even if this theory were sound, which I did not

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believe, I felt sure that it would break down in practice. If Europe were once again to be plunged into the horrors of a general war in which every nation would engage their whole manhood, it would be impossible for Great Britain to allow a very large proportion of her young able-bodied citizens to continue their civil avocations. Nor would the young men themselves tolerate it. They would demand the right to fight for their country, a right which it would be impossible to deny them. We should be compelled then to form an army in haste as we did in 1914. Would it not be wiser to make the necessary preparations in peace time, and to lay plans for an army which could, on the outbreak of war, give important assistance to the forces of our allies and which would be capable of large and rapid expansion?

The last task that I performed at the War Office was the preparation of a memorandum on these lines. It remains in the files of that department. Before it could be printed or circulated to my colleagues, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had become Prime Minister, and I had crossed the road from the War Office to the Admiralty.

I remember thinking at the time, with rather pathetic optimism, that if only Mr. Chamberlain would read my memorandum, it would alter his opinion and I think I said something of the kind to him when he informed me of his decision that I should leave the War Office. I was sorry to go, but I shall always remember as a proof of his breadth of mind, of his toleration and of his patience, which I had often sorely tried, that having differed from me as he had, on an important matter, he did not take the opportunity of ridding himself altogether of my services. I wonder how often he regretted his decision.

When a guarantee had been given to defend a land frontier in Central Europe, a guarantee which the Minister for Co-ordination of Defence said in the House of Commons on October 4th was already morally binding on Great Britain, the necessity of preparing an army for Continental warfare could no longer be questioned. It seemed to me that it would not only prove impossible but that it would be wrong to construct such an army on a voluntary basis and while I doubted whether the country was yet in a mood to accept conscription, I considered that full advantage should be taken of the willingness to serve which then existed, in order to prepare the way for the introduction of conscription later.

My second article in the *Evening Standard* was therefore entitled 'The Will to Serve', and appeared on October 19th:

'A greater will to serve exists in Great Britain to-day than has existed for exactly twenty years. The opportunity should not be missed of translating this will to serve into terms of service. Conscription is the cry that leaps to all men's mouths and having uttered it, they feel that they have made their contribution to the councils of the nation, and need do nothing further but wait impatiently for the necessary action by the Government.

'Having served so long in the ranks of the criticized, I have still sympathy with their difficulties, for which the critics make so little allowance, and still feel that criticism if it is to be helpful, must also be constructive.

'Difficulties with regard to conscription are many, but the first and most obvious is that the Prime Minister has promised not to introduce it in peace time during the life of the present Parliament. He has not taken advantage

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of the crisis through which we have passed to go back upon that definite undertaking.

'I am sure that he has been right. So long as the democracies survive, they must stand for certain principles of conduct in internal as well as external affairs. Of these principles one of the most important is that solemn pledges shall remain binding.

'But such a pledge can in no way preclude the Government from recommending a different policy when they next appeal to the electorate. Nor is there any reason why during the months that divide them from that appeal they should not prepare the public mind for such a policy, and prepare the machinery to put it in force.

'The conception of compulsory service has always been hateful to Englishmen. Immunity from foreign invasion has spared us the shame which able-bodied civilians must feel at the sight on their soil of foreign soldiers whom, as civilians, they have no right to resist. And therefore conscription, which has been accepted without protest in the most democratic countries, has always been regarded in Great Britain as the beginning of tyranny.

'But times have changed, and no longer can we hope to retain privileges which are not enjoyed in the other countries of Europe. Henceforth it is the first duty of our leaders to explain this new situation to the people, and to persuade them to accept the sacrifices that it imposes.

'Unofficial statements in the Press give it to be understood that the Government have already decided to draw up a National Register, which will form a kind of census of the nation based upon potentialities of war service. The design of such a register should be to ensure that every able-bodied man in the kingdom should be

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employed in an emergency upon the task which he can best perform in the service of the community, and that he should know in peace time what that task will be in order that he may be trained to fulfil it.

‘No pledge will be broken by the carrying out of this scheme. No legislation, so far as is at present apparent, will be required. It should be completed before the General Election.

‘But, desirable as the drawing up of such a register must be, it will not alone go more than half-way towards the solution of the problem.

‘The problem is the application of our man power, and there are two sides to it, which may roughly be described as supply and demand. The register should provide complete information with regard to supply. It should tell us how much material, and of what kind, is at our disposal. It will remain to be decided how best that material may be employed.

‘Simultaneously, therefore, with the above inquiry, steps should be taken to ascertain what are the nation’s requirements. The simplest method would be to ask the three service departments and the Home Office to formulate their demands. They should each furnish a statement giving the number of men that they want and the purposes for which they are wanted.

‘These statements should be submitted to the Chiefs of Staffs Committee and the Minister for Co-ordination of Defence, in order to ensure that there shall be no overlapping. They should then be accepted by the Cabinet and the necessary steps taken to supply the demand.

‘The task of the Admiralty would be an easy one. The Board would have no difficulty in deciding upon the size

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of the Fleet that they consider the minimum consistent with security, and upon the number of men required to man it.

‘The task of the Air Ministry should not prove more complicated, and the main concern of the Home Office should be to make sure that they do not take for Air Raid Precautions men whose services would be better employed elsewhere.

‘But, as usual, the most difficult task would fall to the War Office.

‘Those who think that they have solved the problem when they cry for conscription have in fact hardly begun to consider it.

‘Conscription on the continental model would provide us with a huge short-service land force for home defence. This would no doubt be an admirable thing in itself, but it is not what we want. It would be about as useful to Great Britain as a coach and four to a Venetian.

‘Our frontiers are protected by the Royal Navy. If that protection should ever fail, no land force could replace it, for the simple reason that our enemies would not give themselves the trouble of invading a country that they could reduce much more easily by starvation.

‘That we need a larger army than we at present possess, I firmly believe. But we want it principally for foreign service, not for home service. The greater part of our Army is abroad to-day.

‘Further, conscription if it were introduced to-morrow, would produce a vast army without barracks, equipment or trained instructors. Expansion, therefore, must be gradual, which does not mean that it need be slow. And it should be directed towards a definite end.

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‘The Army has three main duties to perform. It has first to provide the anti-aircraft defences of the country. Whether these can still be entrusted to a partially trained voluntary force of patriotic citizens, who can devote only a portion of their spare time to these vitally important duties, is open to question.

‘Secondly, the Army has to provide garrisons for the protection of the Empire.

‘Thirdly, as a result of our recently increased commitments on the Continent of Europe, we are more than ever bound to have in readiness a field force which could play an appreciable part in Continental warfare. It need not be enormous, although, in my opinion, it should be at least twice the size of anything we could put into the field at present. It should be, as it was in 1914, for its size the most modern and efficient force in the world.

‘I do not believe that these combined demands upon the man-power of the country can be satisfied if the voluntary system is retained.

‘It may, on the other hand, prove possible to satisfy them without the great upheaval in industry which universal military service would produce. For the needs of industry must also be considered in apportioning the man power at our disposal. It would be folly to train more soldiers than we need and at the same time deplete the factories which are making the munitions for their use.

‘The task is not a simple one, but it should not surpass the wit of man. Upon the efficient performance of it depends the survival of the Empire. It should be set in hand without delay.’

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Re-reading this article in the light of after events, I find nothing in it to withdraw or qualify. It would indeed be difficult to deny that as the Government did finally introduce a measure of compulsory service in April, it would have been better if they had foreseen in October that it would prove necessary and had laid their plans and composed their speeches accordingly, instead of embarking on schemes that wasted time and using language condemnatory of conscription, which subsequently increased their difficulties. But those who believed in the policy of Munich still hoped that it might lead to an improvement in the international situation, and in that hope they postponed measures which ultimately proved inevitable.

Both at the War Office and at the Admiralty, I had found my difficulties considerably increased by the strict financial control exercised by the Treasury. During the year 1938, the Treasury had been more than usually active and had succeeded not only in delaying, but also in considerably reducing British schemes of rearmament. My third article therefore, which appeared on October 26th, dealt with this question.

‘It forms perhaps a slightly ironical commentary on the success of the Government’s recent peace policy that those who most loudly applaud it are most deeply convinced that the first result of it should be an intensification of our preparations for war.

‘There is present to-day in the country and there will soon be apparent in the House of Commons an insistent demand for the more rapid delivery of bigger and better armaments.

‘How is this demand to be met? During the last three

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years the labours of the service departments have been incessant.

‘No effort upon their part has been spared, nor would any increase in their activity be possible. But there is nobody who has been engaged upon this work, whether as a Minister or as an official, who would not admit that more would have been accomplished in shorter time if it had not been for the ever-present paralysing hand of the Treasury.

‘Let it be made plain from the start that neither the Chancellor of the Exchequer nor, still less, the officials of the Treasury, are in any way to blame.

‘Under the system as it exists they have certain duties to perform and if they failed to perform them they would be guilty of grave dereliction. They are as patriotic as other men and possibly as much alive to the urgency of rearmament, although the zealous Civil Servant is apt to think that the contribution of his own department is more important than that of any other to the welfare of the State, just as the soldier loves his regiment and the sailor loves his ship.

‘At the beginning of the rearmament campaign it was laid down that full Treasury control over expenditure was to be maintained, and the result has been delays and difficulties at every stage. Let me briefly explain how the system works in practice.

‘In the first place the Treasury, which would be known in any other country as the Ministry of Finance, is one of the smallest departments and one of the most efficient.

‘It is housed in one of the oldest buildings in Whitehall, and the clerks carry out their high functions in

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conditions which the Ministry of Health would never permit in a modern factory.

'The personnel have long been considered the *corps d'élite* of the Civil Service. It used to be the custom for the candidates who obtained the highest marks in the examination to be given their choice of Government departments.

'Almost invariably they chose the Treasury. This method was designed to ensure that the Treasury should command the best brains in the Service, but of recent years the system has been further improved upon from the Treasury's point of view. The young man who gets the most marks does not always prove in the long run the best Civil Servant.

'Nowadays no candidate passes direct from the examination into the Treasury. All are distributed amongst other departments where the most likely are carefully watched and reports are received on their practical ability.

'So that it is not until they have proved that they possess the qualities of competent officials as well as the ability to pass examinations that they receive the distinction of promotion to the Treasury.

'It is well that they should be so carefully selected in view of the duties that they have to perform. For to the Treasury must go every proposal to spend money by every other department of the State. And at the Treasury every such proposal is subjected to the most thorough and searching inquiry before it is approved.

'In normal times it is an admirable system, and the taxpayer can congratulate himself upon the efficiency with which it works. For in normal times it is the tax-

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payer's main interest that not a penny of his hard-earned and reluctantly-paid contribution to his country's finances should be thrown away.

'But "normal times" are becoming almost synonymous with the Golden Age. Some of us wonder whether they ever existed. Most of us fear we shall never see them again.

'And to-day even the taxpayer is persuaded that there are worse things in the world than the payment of taxes. He is beginning to believe that the punctual appearance and accurate performance of the gun that is to protect his home and family are of greater importance than the price that is paid for it. Some reflection of this new mood should appear in the sphere of administration.

'The personnel of the Defence departments consists partly of civil servants and partly of serving officers. These latter do tours of duty lasting for three or four years in the Ministry of the service to which they belong. They come direct from the active exercise of their profession and bring with them the fresh air which is occasionally lacking in Government departments. They also bring with them the latest expert knowledge based upon practical experience.

'Such officers know very well what they want. It may be anything from a new gun to an administrative reform.

'They know why they want it and they probably know the cheapest way to get it. But when they are faced by the Treasury expert with his first class brain and long training in negotiation, who first seeks to prove that what is alleged to be wanted is not wanted at all, and, as his second line of defence, suggests a dozen ways in which it

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could be more cheaply obtained, then the serving officers, though they may stick to their guns in every sense of the word, are bound to take time in finding answers to questions that had never occurred to them.

'So weeks are lost and sometimes months, and men who are longing to get on with the work begin to despair.

'Over all decisions, Ministerial or departmental, the menace of the Treasury veto hangs like the shadow of the guillotine.

'The knowledge that this power exists has a paralysing effect upon initiative. The files in the defence departments are sprinkled freely with the minute "Is it any use asking Treasury approval for this?" And the answer is usually in the negative.

'Again, Ministers and those advising them on questions of supply and administration are, under the present system, often compelled to weigh the relative importance of two quite unrelated proposals, both of which they believe to be absolutely necessary and for the comparison of which no scales exist.

'There might for instance be suggested an expensive improvement in Service conditions considered necessary for the health of the troops and the encouragement of recruiting, and at the same time there might be a demand for the construction of a new factory to provide an indispensable weapon of war.

'The Minister would know that finance would not permit the fulfilment of both demands. Can he and his advisers be blamed if they hesitate long before deciding which of them to abandon? So time is lost.

'Meanwhile the totalitarian States are hampered by

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no such restrictions. They build a thousand tanks, find a defect, scrap the lot and build another thousand. The Treasury, like a governess foretelling the awful fate that is bound to overtake other children who enjoy liberties that are denied to her own charges, has been telling us for years that these naughty, reckless countries will soon go bankrupt. But they don't. They seem to thrive on their folly and batten upon their extravagance.

'If we are to compete with them, we must assuredly adopt some of their methods. Otherwise we shall not overtake them. On the contrary they will increase their lead'.

During the period that I held office, I frequently felt that there existed need, not only of minor administrative changes, but also of major constitutional reform. The greatest change that has taken place during the last hundred years has been the increased rapidity of communications. This has profoundly affected every sphere of human life. The street boy in Australia knows the result of the Derby almost as soon as the majority of the crowd at Epsom. The words of the rulers of great countries are heard all over the world, even as they fall from the mouths of the speakers. Speed therefore is to-day a part of efficiency. But while a process of speeding up has been applied to almost every other form of activity, the process of Cabinet government in England remains the same as when Lord Liverpool and his colleagues, contending with Napoleon, relied for the supply of all their information upon horse and sail, and when the most important dispatches had to await a favourable wind. It has been proved that Cabinet government, as we know it, does not work in a crisis. As politics now consist of a series of

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crises, I suggested, in the following article, that the present system stood in need of reform:

* * * *

'We are living in a stern age of fierce competition. Survival depends upon the highest efficiency. Not the least important element in efficiency is rapidity of decision.

'The Cabinet system is not designed to produce such rapidity. This implies no criticism of the present distinguished occupants of office, but it must be obvious that a committee of twenty-one, when faced by a dictator, is at as great a disadvantage as a gentleman of the eighteenth century would be, fumbling with the hilt of his rapier, in the presence of a modern exponent of the art of revolver-shooting from the pocket.

'To-day, when the decisions of dictators are taken with the rapidity of lightning, when in a civilized country all the members of a potential Opposition can be wiped out in twenty-four hours, when a whole country can be annexed over a week-end, when the frontiers of Europe can be redrawn and the conditions of transfer of territories and populations can be laid down by four men in the course of a single day, can the Government of Great Britain continue to be carried on by a score of middle-aged and elderly gentlemen meeting together once a week when Parliament is in session?

'If the Democracies are to survive in their competition with the Dictatorships from which they have hitherto received a series of defeats, they must drastically reform their systems of government and administration.

'Such reform, if it is to be effective, must begin from the top. When an army loses a campaign the fault should

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be looked for, not in the sergeants' mess, but in the General Staff. The system of Cabinet government has for more than two centuries conferred inestimable benefits upon the people of Great Britain. It has preserved order, it has extended liberty, it has brought us victorious through many small wars and two great ones, and it has created an Empire.

'But the supreme merit of our unwritten constitution has ever been its adaptability to the changing circumstances of an unstable world. And it should be remembered that during the two greatest crises through which Great Britain has passed during the twentieth century, the system of Cabinet Government proved inadequate. Those two crises occurred in the years 1914 to 1918 and in September 1938.

'During the former a small War Cabinet was set up to deal with all questions of the first importance. During the latter the most important decisions were taken without previous approval of the Cabinet, who were summoned as often to be informed as to be consulted.

'The Prime Minister was, however, in almost continuous council with three of his most trusted colleagues, and the remainder cheerfully recognized that no other procedure would in fact have been practicable, as events were moving far too rapidly to be dealt with by a committee which then consisted of twenty-two. It is further satisfactory to record that the decisions taken by the smaller body, or sometimes by the Prime Minister alone, always received subsequently unanimous approval, with one unhappy exception on the last day of the month.

'Twice, therefore, it has been made plain that the Cabinet is too large and cumbrous a body to function

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in a crisis. The question therefore arises whether it is now either expedient or safe to revert to a system which, in times of emergency, we have been forced to abandon.

‘Ineluctable facts point to the desirability of setting up a smaller body to deal with the more pressing and important problems.

‘Two methods of diminishing the size of the supreme executive suggest themselves. The first is to drop from the Cabinet those Ministers who hold the less important offices. The Minister of Transport and the Chancellor of the Duchy, who are to-day included, have not always been so, nor has the Lord Privy Seal.

‘If these three were to be dropped the total would not however be sensibly decreased. Supposing there were joined to their number the Ministers of Education, Health, Labour and Agriculture, and the three Service Ministers on the ground that the Ministers for Co-ordination of Defence could speak for all of them, and supposing that the Lord President of the Council were added on the ground that he was responsible for no department of State, it would seem then that the extreme limit had been reached in the process of elimination.

‘Scotland would certainly object if her Secretary of State were sacrificed, and still deeper resentment would be felt by the peoples of the Dominions, the Colonies, and India, if they were no longer represented. Nor could a nation of shopkeepers consign to the second rank the President of the Board of Trade.

‘The Cabinet would thus be divided into two halves, with eleven members in each. But little good would in fact have been accomplished, for eleven is still too large a number for the kind of work envisaged — and whether

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harmonious relations would be preserved between the first and second elevens is extremely doubtful. The scheme is in fact fantastic, and has only been examined in order to prove it so. Reform must be sought along other lines.

‘It is often wise to establish in principle what has proved useful in practice, and if this rule were adopted it might be laid down that the Inner Cabinet should always consist of the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Foreign and Home Secretaries. A minor objection to such a scheme is that there is nothing in the functions of the Home Secretary to render his presence on such a body as necessary as that of the Minister for Co-ordination of Defence.

‘But the major objection is that all Ministers are at present overworked. None has heavier departmental duties than those referred to above. Membership of the Inner Cabinet must entail additional labours.

‘It would surely, therefore, be wiser to relieve its members of the charge of a busy department. The sinecure offices exist — Lord President of the Council, Lord Privy Seal and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. These should form with the Prime Minister the new committee of Public Safety. But do not let it be supposed that I am recommending that the present holders of these offices should necessarily be its members.

‘The men we need should be carefully chosen and they should be allowed to devote to their high task every ounce of their energy and every minute of their time. They should be spared both the routine duties of a department of State and the time-wasting and nerve-racking irritations of Parliamentary opposition. They

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would often summon one or other of their colleagues to their councils. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Foreign Secretary would be the most frequent attendants.

‘On members of this Inner Cabinet would rest a greater burden of responsibility than any British statesmen have ever borne. The future of the Empire is in grave danger, our very liberties are at stake. The salvation of all that we stand for must depend upon the abilities of two or three men during the next two or three years.’

THE NEW SESSION

THE new session of Parliament opened on November 8th. The mood in which Members met differed considerably from that which had prevailed in October. There no longer existed any desire to extol the agreement of Munich as a great achievement of statecraft. The prevailing sentiment was that the less said about the past the better, and that it was more important to get on with the plans for the future.

I wrote an article which appeared on the day of the opening of Parliament and to which I gave the title of 'The New Session'. It appeared however, under the heading, 'Make Every Man a Fighter', which, as the reader will see, was neither what I desired nor advocated:

'The new session of Parliament begins to-day. It is likely to be one of the most important sessions in our history. It follows immediately upon the greatest crisis that has occurred in international affairs since 1914. It will be followed, almost certainly, by a General Election.

'The debates that took place in both Houses during last week provide an indication of the subjects which are likely to absorb the attention of Parliament during the months that lie ahead. The first of these subjects is rearmament, with which I propose to deal in this article. The second is the future of our colonies, which means the future of our Empire.

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'Last week's debate revealed two tendencies. First, a disinclination to look back into the past, to squabble over the events of September, or to speculate upon what might have been the results of a different policy.

'Relief that peace has been preserved is as widespread as is reluctance to inquire too closely into the measures which were necessary to preserve it. We cannot blame the heir to a fortune if he accepts it without meticulous investigation into the manner in which it was acquired.

'But the other tendency, not less clearly pronounced, was a determination to look forward into the future in order to ensure that a disaster so narrowly avoided shall not be allowed to threaten us again.

'It would be idle to deny that the minds of those who are hoping that the lesson of 1938 will bear fruit in 1939 are filled with anxiety which the assurances given by Ministers last week were insufficient to dispel.

'The reason for this anxiety is that the conviction has been brought home to many members of the community and is rapidly spreading, that the whole scheme of our rearmament policy is conceived upon too small a scale.

'The world has changed catastrophically in the last five years. The people of Great Britain are slow to perceive what is taking place on the Continent of Europe. The narrow seas which have so largely lost their utility as a barrier still perform the less desirable function of a screen.

'Two public utterances of last week may be taken as symptomatic and as showing the profound difference of outlook which still divides Europe from Great Britain.

✓'Dr. Ley, the head of the German Labour Front, said

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that the efforts made by Germany during the past five years must now be redoubled, that they must not only maintain their lead in aerial armament and other fields but must increase it many times, and that they must multiply their production by a hundred per cent if they were to obtain sufficient territory for their needs (*Lebensraum*). This was said just a month after his Leader's solemn assurance that Germany's territorial ambitions in Europe were at an end and that her colonial aspirations could never lead to war.

✓ 'At the same time Sir Thomas Inskip, our own Minister for Co-ordination of Defence, was assuring the boys of Kingston Grammar School that if we had lost prestige during the past few weeks — and he did not admit that we had — he was quite certain that we should recover it "merely because we had in this country a traditional and historic capacity for recovery by sheer force of character of our race, the reputation that we have in the capitals of Europe and the world".

'The two statements belong to two different periods. The latter takes one back to Rugby chapel in the middle of the last century. But there is a great gulf fixed between Dr. Arnold and Dr. Goebbels. The Hitler Jugend have very different schooldays from those which were enjoyed by Tom Brown. They also are encouraged to develop force of character — and it would be a bold man who would claim any monopoly for Great Britain in that respect — but they are taught that force of character should be supplemented by airplanes, submarines and machine-guns.

'The plain fact which we have got to get into our heads is that to-day the whole continent of Europe is organized

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for war. That every man in that continent is a trained fighter and that it is the intention of every Government to expedite and intensify military preparations.

'Great Britain alone, although her world responsibilities are far vaster than those of any other country, remains firm in her refusal to abandon the system which served her so well in the nineteenth century and to regard war as anything but an extremely remote possibility which can be satisfactorily dealt with by small professional forces.

'The anxiety which exists in the country and which was reflected in Parliament last week found practical expression in two demands. One was for the setting up of a Ministry of Supply and the other was for a National Register.

'The demand for a Ministry of Supply was turned down by the Prime Minister for the inadequate reason that it would be useless unless it was furnished with compulsory powers.

'The obvious method of overcoming that difficulty would be to furnish it with such powers. If it were objected that to do so would be a breach of the Prime Minister's pledge not to introduce compulsion during the lifetime of the present Parliament, it should be remembered that that lifetime is rapidly drawing to its close. Its end might be hastened, and there could be no better argument for hastening it than the urgency of introducing some measure of compulsion.

'The Government have undertaken to compile a National Register, but this register is to be upon a voluntary basis. The value of such a register will be precisely nil. It would be as useful to have a compendium

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of Christmas Goose Clubs. It will merely be a record of the pious aspirations or the passing moods of a number of people of doubtful patriotism.

‘For those who are truly anxious to serve their country are doing so at present in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, in the Territorial Army or in the Auxiliary Air Force. No National Register is required for them. Meanwhile, a great many who should be serving in one or other of the above are seeking a safer and an easier billet under the auspices of the A.R.P.

‘But those who are doing nothing at present will, when the Voluntary National Register is set up, be able to salve their easy consciences by volunteering to do something when the crisis occurs. As the whole thing is to be on a voluntary basis, however, no means can exist of holding them to their word. Mr. Jones, who thinks to-day that he might like to be a soldier, may have changed his mind before the next emergency. He may have found his wings, he may have heard the call of the sea or he may have signed the peace pledge and consider it more binding than the National Register.

‘There are indeed many unanswerable arguments against drawing up a National Register on a voluntary basis, but the shortest and simplest is this. When a war breaks out the people of Great Britain will not allow the whole brunt of it to be borne by those who have had the energy and courage to volunteer their services in peace time, while their jobs are taken by the slackers and the cowards.

‘There will be an irresistible demand that a new and real register of the whole nation on a compulsory basis be drawn up immediately and the old one will only

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remain as an historical curiosity as a record of time wasted by Civil Servants, of money wasted by the public and of the ineptitude of Ministers.'

As the debate on the Address proceeded, there was evidence throughout the House of a feeling that the Government were failing to estimate correctly the gravity of the situation, and that, therefore, the plans that they were making to cope with it were inadequate. Some shared the opinion, eloquently expressed by Mr. Eden, that the first step towards putting the country on a war footing, was the reconstruction of the Government on a broader basis. Under the menace of international disaster it seemed folly to continue the waste of time and energy involved in party strife.

It was under the impression of the unreality of this party warfare in relation to the great political issues of the day, that I wrote my next article which appeared on November 15th under the title of 'New Parties for Old'.

'The days are gone, those happy days, when Gilbert wrote and Sullivan sang:

Every little boy or gal,
Born into this world alive,
Is either a little Liberal
Or else a little Conservative.

'The party system has worked very well in this country for two hundred years. Can it continue to do so? It has served as a solid basis for Parliamentary Government. The majority of European and other nations have so much admired the success of our Parliamentary institutions that they have attempted to imitate them.

'In most cases imitation has resulted in failure, and the

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cause of failure has usually been inability to create a sound party system. Lacking that foundation, the edifice has collapsed.

‘It is easy to draw up constitutions and to build Houses of Parliament, but the party system is a natural growth. It cannot be laid down by law nor built up by hands.

‘Further, the party system is a mechanism of great delicacy. It demands first that there shall be a broad division of opinion, and, secondly, that it shall divide the people in fairly even proportions. The party system ceases if there is no hope of one of the two parties ever getting into power.

‘This division of opinion must be neither too shallow nor too deep — neither too feeble nor too violent. If it errs either in the one direction or in the other the system will fail. If the division is too shallow the thing becomes a sham.

‘There was a danger of this in the middle of the eighteenth century when the Tories had ceased to be Jacobites, and differed on no question of principle from the Whigs.

‘Then came the King’s attempt to govern by himself, the American War of Independence, the demand for reform and the French Revolution — great events, to which Englishmen reacted diversely and which produced that cleavage of opinion essential to the party system.

‘Again, in the middle of the nineteenth century party differences began to disappear. It would be difficult indeed to describe the difference in political philosophy which divided the Conservative Lord Aberdeen from the Liberal Lord Palmerston.

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‘Once again the thing was becoming a sham, but once again new causes, Home Rule, Welsh Disestablishment, and, above all, the Tariff Question, put new life into the old system. Up to the war it flourished, and, indeed, its main danger in 1914 was excess of vigour rather than lack of it.

‘For, as I have said, if difference of opinion is too strong the system is in as great danger as if it is too weak. Once men believe that their political opponents ought to be sent to prison or put to death, the party system collapses. It could not exist in modern Germany or in modern Russia, for in both those countries to differ from the ruling faction is accounted treason to the State.

‘In 1914, it seemed possible that the party system might degenerate into civil war, as it has so tragically degenerated in Spain. But the Great War brought the parties together, and after it they remained together long enough to find a solution of the Irish question. During the years that followed, Socialism was the issue. Does it remain the issue to-day?

‘There has probably never been so much political discussion between private individuals as during the last two months, but it would be hardly rash to assert that Socialism has never been discussed.

‘We are approaching the end of a week’s debate in Parliament in which any subject may be raised. It has not occurred to anyone to raise the subject of Socialism. We have now been governed for seven years by a government which combines Conservatives, Liberals and Socialists. There has never been the slightest sign that the consciences of the Socialist members of the Cabinet have been troubled by this long and close association with

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their Capitalist colleagues. Nor have the Conservative Party hesitated to accept at the bidding of the Government, measures, such as the Coal Bill, of a pronouncedly Socialistic character.

‘Is it possible, therefore, to believe that Socialism is no longer the issue? And if it be possible, must it not follow either that the system will collapse for lack of an issue, or else that a new issue will arise that will produce a new alignment?’

‘Foreign policy is at present occupying the minds of those who give much thought to political questions. It is occupying their minds almost to the exclusion of every other topic. And with regard to foreign policy there exists profound and sincere difference of opinion. This is deplorable, but it is true, and we cannot alter the fact by deploring it.

‘Is it a division of opinion which cuts clean across existing party lines. It produces strange phenomena, such as the majority of the Tory Party vociferously cheering the ultra-pacifism of Mr. Lansbury, while regarding the Duchess of Atholl as a dangerous revolutionary.

‘In the Labour Party, discipline has always been stricter and heresy hunting more popular than among supporters of the National Government, but if that discipline were relaxed there is little doubt that a considerable number of Labour members would express their whole-hearted approval of the Prime Minister’s policy.

‘This has already been done by the Independent Labour Party, which are the only Parliamentary Party that are quite solid in their support of Mr. Chamberlain. Doubts exist in the minds of a large number of Conserva-

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tives as to the wisdom of that policy, doubts which in some cases amount to conviction.

‘The issue may be broadly stated as follows. The political arena is at present dominated by certain aggressive States, who have resorted in some cases to the threat, in other cases to the use, of force, in order to impose their will.

‘There are many people who believe that peace with these States will be best preserved by pursuing a policy of concession. That it will prove possible to satisfy them and that when they are satisfied they will abandon aggression.

‘There are others who believe them to be insatiable, and who hold that concession has already gone too far. They therefore conclude that the way to maintain peace is to present a bold front supported by sufficient force to ensure, in the last resort, victory. They believe that the resources of the British Empire, in combination with those of allies who would rally to the cause, would be sufficient to provide that force which alone will persuade the powers of aggression to moderate their demands, that the surest way to prevent a war is to convince those Powers that they are likely to lose it.

‘This difference of opinion, important as it is, could not alone form the basis of a permanent realignment of parties, for it should be the object of all to keep out of party warfare any question of foreign policy, in the conduct of which continuity is before all things desirable.

‘It may well be, therefore, that the existing cleavage is but a passing phase, and that when it has passed parties will relapse into their earlier formation. It may, on the other hand, prove the prelude to the disappearance of a system which has done its work and has had its day.

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‘Nothing can last for ever and the challenge of the totalitarian States seems to demand a degree of national unity and national efficiency which the party system cannot provide’.

I think that the two different views that then existed with regard to foreign policy are fairly stated in the concluding paragraphs of this article. In the light of after events, there can be no doubt as to which was the correct one, and it is satisfactory to those, who as a small minority supported it at the time, to reflect that it triumphed in the end and was finally adopted by His Majesty’s Government.

The debate on the Address concluded with a division on an amendment moved by the Liberal Party in favour of setting up a Ministry of Supply. By Parliamentary usage, which Ministers find so hard to overlook and which the general public find so hard to understand, any amendment to the Address must be defeated by an overwhelming majority and for this purpose, a three-line Whip is issued to all supporters of the Government who are thereby warned that failure to vote as ordered may expose them to all the penalties which the party machine can impose. Therefore, on this occasion, although all the principal speakers, including the Minister for Co-ordination of Defence and the Prime Minister, admitted that the subject of debate was not a party question, the voting that subsequently took place was on strictly party lines. Only one or two supporters of the Government went with Mr. Winston Churchill into the opposition lobby, but several abstained. I felt myself able to support the Government for reasons that I explained in the speech that I made shortly before the division. I fear that my

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reference to the attitude of the Secretaries of State for War and Air was not without a tinge of malice, for it was strongly rumoured that although their views had not prevailed both Right Honourable gentlemen were strongly in favour of setting up a Ministry of Supply. I said:

‘Having listened to nearly every speech in this debate, I think the note that has been running through it is one of general agreement. I do not find any great division of opinion. Certain points of view have been emphasized more strongly than others by different speakers, as is natural, but the general view has been, I think, that the merits or demerits of a Ministry of Supply are a subject of interesting inquiry and debate which naturally produce differences of opinion, but that the creation of a Ministry itself is not a matter of very first-rate importance. There has been a general feeling going through every speech I have heard, except the speech of the Right Hon. gentleman the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence, that all is not well and that if the Ministry of Supply is not a solution there are other forms of improvement. The Hon. Member who has just spoken (Mr. Granville) made some interesting suggestions. The Hon. Member for Stockport (Sir A. Gridley) made other suggestions. They all indicated the same profound feeling, which I think is present in the House and in the country, that reform is required and that the machine as it works at present is not wholly satisfactory.

‘It is unfortunate that we should be obliged to debate this subject of Government machinery, of administration, under the auspices of a three-line Whip. It is quite possible to be a more loyal supporter of the National

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Government's policy, even than the Right Hon. gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill), to believe profoundly that they are a very good Government, to support their internal and foreign policy and yet to think that a Ministry of Supply might possibly help them to carry out that policy. But if anybody evinces that opinion to-night — and the only way the majority of Members can evince that opinion is by going into the lobby against the Government — he has immediately committed a crime against the party, the Government and his constituents, and renders himself liable to all the pains and penalties that inevitably ensue. I do not say that this is the fault of the Whips. I know that it is a matter of Parliamentary procedure that any Amendment to the Address must always be regarded as raising a matter of first-rate importance and treated as a matter of confidence.

‘Though nobody is to blame it is regrettable, and for two reasons. In the first place it would be impossible to explain to anybody outside this country unacquainted with our Parliamentary procedure and Parliamentary institutions why it was necessary to have a three-line Whip on the question of a Ministry of Supply. Imagine trying to explain to a Frenchman, or an Italian, or a German, how a man may sincerely believe that a Ministry of Supply would be a good thing and yet is, under our Parliamentary procedure, forced to vote against it, because otherwise he would be showing himself a disloyal supporter of the Government which he desires loyally to support. Secondly, anything that brings Parliamentary procedure into disrepute at the present time is to be deplored. Of course many Hon. Members will

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find themselves in a difficult position, for I believe there are Hon. Members who are sincerely convinced that a Ministry of Supply is urgently needed and would be a very good thing, Members who whole-heartedly support the present Government, and they will be in the unpleasant position of either voting against their Government or against what they think to be desirable. I shall not blame any of them if they support the Government, because, after all, when you are presented with a conflict between two loyalties, loyalty to your own opinion and loyalty to the party and the Government which you wish to support, it is a matter of conscience which every man must decide for himself. For that reason also it is most regrettable, even though it is inevitable, that a question like that of a Ministry of Supply should form the subject of a three-line Whip.

‘Fortunately for me, I find myself in none of these conscientious difficulties over the question. I can whole-heartedly and conscience-free give my support to the Government this evening. The question of a Ministry of Supply is one to which I have devoted a good deal of attention and thought. I have held positions which enabled me to form some opinion, but, quite frankly, my mind remains open on the subject. I have listened to the powerful arguments this evening from both sides of the House, in favour of and against the proposal, and I still think there is a great deal to be said upon both sides. When I was at the War Office I thought there was much more to be said for a Ministry of Supply than when I was at the Admiralty. I think it would help, or it might help, the War Office and the Air Ministry, whereas I do not think it would be of any service to the Admiralty.

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‘After all, in a question of administration surely, if you have any opinion of the administrators, you can leave the decision to them. If you are shown over a factory as an amateur, and a bright idea strikes you as to how efficiency might be improved or economy effected, and you put it to the person who is showing you over, and he says, “We have gone into that very point, we have thought it over and we have decided, on the whole, against it, because we do not think it would produce the results you suggest”, the ordinary humble amateur immediately dismisses the subject from his mind. He assumes that those who are running the factory are better qualified to form an accurate opinion as to the use of the new machinery or the value of the reform he has suggested than he is. Equally, surely, those who have any respect for His Majesty’s Ministers must feel that they are the best judges of whether this suggested reform will assist them in carrying out their task. We have in the Secretary of State for Air and the Secretary of State for War two exceptionally able Ministers. If it is their considered opinion, and I am quite sure it is — at any rate we shall see by their votes this evening — that a Ministry of Supply cannot help them in the task in which they are engaged, then who am I, or who is anyone else, to take a different view? I am quite content to abide by their decision.

‘The only reason why I regret that that decision has been taken is one not really connected with the merits of a Ministry of Supply at all. I think it would have been useful from another point of view if the Government had decided to set up a Ministry of Supply — providing, of course, that it would have helped — because it would have been useful in helping to convey to the people of

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England and the peoples of the world that we are really seriously tackling the problem of rearmament on a new basis. We are apt in this country — I think it is an English characteristic — not to indulge in advertisement or propaganda to the same extent as other countries. We spend insignificant and negligible sums yearly upon propaganda. Countries far poorer than us spend much more. It is a pleasant quality, perhaps, in the Englishman to run himself down: the expression used by the Prime Minister the other day was, "fouling one's own nest". I am afraid it is a habit which Englishmen very naturally acquire.

I do not think the Leader of the Opposition could justly be accused of fouling his own nest if he criticizes the Government, because, after all, that is what he is there for; but the speech of the Secretary of State for War at the close of the last Session describing the lack of preparations for dealing with air raids was, I thought, as pretty a piece of self-nest fouling as ever I listened to. I have no doubt that he was quite right to take the line of full confession. He could easily have taken a different line if he had wished, and concealed and camouflaged and defended the deficiencies that were present; but I was glad afterwards when the Prime Minister said that our preparations in 1938 were probably in no way inferior to those of 1914. I think the attack made upon him this afternoon by the Right Hon. Member for Epping was not merited. I did not take the Prime Minister's remarks upon that occasion as criticizing in any way the preparations made in 1914. All he said was that if instead of the tragedy of war there had been a sudden demobilization in 1914 it would, of course, have been

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followed by an inquiry, and all the organizations that were bad and everything that was missing and lacking, would have had the full limelight played upon them. It would have been found that so far from our preparations being worse in 1938 than in 1914 we were very much better prepared. I believe that to be profoundly true.

‘Fortunately, we won the War started in 1914, and after four and a half years the country was not in a mood to go back to the preparations that were made so long before. But we know the kind of inquiry that would have taken place. We remember the Dardanelles, Mesopotamia, the South African War, the Crimean War — always great deficiencies, great lack of preparations. This country, no country, would ever be found completely prepared for war if there were ever again a case where there was some partial mobilization followed by sudden demobilization. All the lack of preparations would appear. It is only the things that are not done that are ever noticed. It is difficult for the Government adequately to defend themselves in such a matter, but I can assure the House that there were preparations on a scale which were really unthought-of in 1914, preparations for eventualities, which fortunately never arose, that had never been contemplated before the Great War. The stages were not reached in which certain operations would have come into being and certain preparations would have shown themselves. During the three years in which the Government have really dealt with this subject I think they made tremendous strides, and great credit is due to the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence, rather than the jeers to which he is usually

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subjected, for the part he has played in perfecting these preparations.

‘I am particularly glad that the Prime Minister took that line, particularly glad that the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence said what he did in his speech to-day about our preparations, about the strength not only of our Army and our Navy but also of our Air Force. These are facts of which there has been a great danger of losing sight.

‘The Hon. Member who seconded the Motion said that there had been given, as one of the reasons of the policy that culminated at Munich, our lack of preparation for war. He is not in his place at the moment but I do not think that it is true to say that any responsible Minister has ever said in public that that policy was forced upon us owing to our lack of preparation for war. I think it most important that it should be known in this country and in Europe that that policy, whether right or wrong — I have given my reasons before to the House of Commons for thinking that it was a wrong policy — was not dictated by fear of war and that the Government were confident, although they were horrified, rightly and naturally, at the prospect of war, and although they foresaw great suffering in the early stages of the war owing to the inferiority of our Air Force and of the French Air Force, in comparison with that of our potential enemy — of ultimate victory, had we been driven to war.

‘I would also say — and this is equally important — that that was the view of the General Staff in France. They were not afraid to face the issue, had they been driven to it; in fact, so far as I am aware, the only people who were afraid of a long war and doubtful of victory

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were the German General Staff. It was not cowardice that persuaded His Majesty's Government or the Prime Minister to adopt that course, and it is folly to talk of their policy as a coward's policy. The question of cowardice or courage does not come into it when matters of this calibre, of general world significance, are being decided by statesmen. They think of the welfare of their people and of the ultimate objectives at which they are aiming. The main qualities, the outstanding qualities of the Prime Minister with whom I have worked, I am proud to say, for three years in the Cabinet and a year and a half in the Treasury, are courage, consistency and logic. And it is because of his consistency that some people are in doubt as to how the Prime Minister interprets the result of the Munich policy. He is not like some of his more thoughtless supporters. Having cheered themselves hoarse over the Munich Agreement they cleared their throats and said: "That was a great victory. Now we must rearm so as to make sure that it never happens again." I do not think that the Prime Minister thought that it was a great victory. He is much too clear-sighted. I think he thought it was a satisfactory outcome of a very difficult situation and also that it was the beginning of a more hopeful period and that he would be able to settle other questions in the future. Being a reasonable man he thought that the head of the German State was a reasonable man like himself, with a limited ambition. Thinking that, and being logical and consistent, he said: "Why, therefore, should we impose on the country an enormous burden of taxation and ask for fearful sacrifices from the people in preparation for a war that I do not honestly believe is ever going to take place, if that can be avoided?"

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'The first important statement after Munich from a Member of the Government was a remark from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who said:

"A vigorous, complete, urgent and remorseless survey of the whole position is demanded. We must not wait until a crisis occurs; we must do it now."

'Has that complete, remorseless, urgent survey of the whole position taken place? If not, I want to know why. At the same time *The Times* wrote:

"The task of the Government is nothing less than the organization of the resources of the country to meet the needs of a new age."

'When are we going to get it, either the remorseless survey carried out, and if so by whom, or the Government's attempting to meet the needs of the new age?

'What has happened? We have had a new Minister who is to take sole charge of Air Raid Precautions. I am quite sure that the Right Hon. gentleman will carry out that task with the efficiency with which he has carried out every task that has been allotted to him throughout a most distinguished career. The Air Raid Precautions gaps were somewhat exaggerated, and great credit is due to the Home Secretary and the Under Secretary of State for what they have already accomplished in the short time in which they have been engaged on their task. I have no doubt that the Lord Privy Seal will complete that task and it is a very good thing that he is doing so. He has also been entrusted to deal with man-power. His ability to do so will depend upon whether he is given certain powers. If he is asked to waste his time trying to register all the people who now feel voluntarily inclined to do something in war I suggest that he will accomplish

nothing at all. If he is given the power, which the *Daily Express*, often so curiously well-informed about Government plans, announced to-day, that he is to be given power compulsorily to draw it up, that will be a most important and useful step, that we all desire.

‘My own view is that the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence and his colleagues — I speak not without prejudice, having been one of them so long — have carried out, and wisely carried out, a rearmament scheme which was laid down and prepared in 1935, and, as the Prime Minister reminded us, this is the third year of the scheme. A great deal has happened since 1935, which was only three years ago. Then the League of Nations was still a power in the world. There was no civil war in Spain, Italy had not invaded, occupied and established herself in Abyssinia, the Rome-Berlin axis was not dreamt of, Japan was not closely connected with Rome and Berlin, and had not invaded China and conquered half of it. Our relations with Japan and the Japanese Government were far better than they are to-day. Then Germany had not marched into the Rhineland, militarized it and fortified it, Austria was an independent country outside the German orbit, and the Czech Republic was still something to be counted with in Europe, with 30 or 40 of the best fighting divisions, better armed, perhaps, than any other divisions, behind a line of defence almost as strong as the line which protects France. All that has gone. In three years the situation has deteriorated enormously at the expense of Great Britain and what was recommended three years ago is now antiquated, rotten and out of date.

‘It is high time, surely, that new steps were taken to

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meet a new situation, and that that survey, remorseless, vigorous, and urgent, called for by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, should take place. I do not want, as some people have suggested, a Parliamentary inquiry. I believe that would be a waste of time, but I suggest that the same officials who were asked in 1935 to recommend what they considered necessary for the defence of the country should be asked to make further recommendations, in view of an entirely altered situation. A week ago my Right Hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington [Mr. Eden] made in this House a speech which I believe produced a profound impression upon all who heard it. Since then the Press has been full of suggestions as to what he meant. It was the opinion of many that he wished to create a new party. I have not discussed this question with my Right Hon. Friend and I am no more in possession of his mind on the subject than any other Member of the House. But it did not seem to me that his words bore the construction that has been put upon them. He was not asking for a new party. He was not anxious to increase parties but to diminish them. He did not want to stir up political faction. He was pleading for unity. He was facing the new situation in which the world finds itself. He was asking for a new, national, united effort to meet the threat which is now menacing not only the British Empire but the whole civilized world.

‘As I listened to him, I wondered what could be done to carry out the desire that he so eloquently expressed. I felt that, if there had been a war, all that he was asking for could be accomplished in a moment. This House, instead of being a centre of party politics, would have

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become a true council of the nation and matters like a Ministry of Supply would be discussed and voted upon on their merits and not at the crack of a three-line Whip. A National Government on a broader basis would have been formed within twenty-four hours. Rich people would have put their houses and their property at the disposal of the State and poor people would have given up their jobs and risked their livelihoods and those of their families in order to join the Forces. Rich and poor would have laid down their lives for their country "and said 'twas but their duty". Of course, in peace time we cannot accomplish anything on those dimensions, but is it not possible under the menace of war to make an effort towards some similar sacrifice?

"The Hon. Member for Stockport [Sir Arnold Gridley] said he considered that we were not living either in peace or in war but in a period of anxiety, something between the two. Anxiety has been the note of every speech, whether critical or supporting the Government, that I have heard to-night. Is it not possible in a period of national anxiety to make a national effort to accomplish something which would be able to preserve our lives and our liberties? The lead must come from the Government. Private Members can only make suggestions. The Prime Minister has, I believe, the gratitude and the confidence of a majority of the people of the country to-day. These are invaluable assets. With them there is almost nothing that he could not accomplish. Those people have gratitude and confidence in their hearts but they also have deep anxiety. They are looking to him for a lead. If he gives it now, he will have behind him a people united as they have never been, divided on no great political issues

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as they were in 1914. If he fails to give you that lead I believe he will miss one of the greatest opportunities in English history.'

I did my best in this speech to denounce a false belief which still exists and occasionally makes its appearance in controversy. It is still asserted by those who are insufficiently acquainted with the facts, that the policy which culminated at Munich was dictated by the lack of preparedness for war, that the country could not possibly have gone to war owing to deficiency of armaments. Had this been true it would have constituted a fearful indictment of the Government. But it was not true. No Minister had any doubt, so far as I am aware, as to the ability of Great Britain to win the war that was threatened in 1938. Owing to a shortage of anti-aircraft precautions, much damage and suffering might have been sustained in the early stages but there was no reason to fear the ultimate result.

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DURING the interlude that occurred between the agreement of Munich and the occupation of Prague, it appeared to some of us that Great Britain was in fact without any foreign policy that would admit of description or definition. A vague hope that all would be well was accompanied by a vague fear that it wouldn't, which produced a half-hearted scheme of preparation against a shadowy danger, the scope and imminence of which were never clearly stated or frankly faced.

It was in the hope of producing some increased clarity of thought both in policy and in preparation that I wrote the two following articles which appeared respectively on November 29th and December 6th.

The former was entitled 'Wanted — A Foreign Policy':

'The announcement of the Prime Minister's intended visit to Rome, following closely upon his return from Paris, must give rise to speculation all over the world as to the foreign policy of Great Britain.

'More depends upon that policy than the future of Great Britain alone, and we who live in this country have the right to know upon what principles it is founded.

'Excessive curiosity is not to be encouraged, and repeated Parliamentary debates upon foreign affairs do more harm than good. The machinery of diplomacy is of extreme delicacy. When the Government have stated from what base they are proceeding, along what road

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and towards what goal, then, if the people are satisfied that the general principles are sound, they should be content to await in patience the results.

‘Before the war it was clearly understood that our friends in Europe were France and Russia, that our ally in the Far East was Japan, and that while we harboured no aggressive designs in any continent, and while we were prepared to make considerable concessions to the claims of those Powers who considered that their colonial ambitions were unsatisfied, we none the less felt that with such friends and such an ally we could face the most dire emergency with equanimity.

‘That policy had the general approval of all parties.

‘After the war it was believed that the relations of States were to be governed by a new law. All nations were to be members of one society, all disputes were to be settled by arbitration, and all separate agreements were to be made public and only concluded if they received general approval.

‘Should any one State be so bold, so foolish, or so wicked as to violate an arrangement that had been made for the benefit of all, then all the others would inflict upon the peace-breaker the punishment which she had so richly deserved.

‘Believing in the efficacy of this system, the British Government based their foreign policy upon the League of Nations and upon the doctrine of collective security. This policy had the support of all parties and the explicit adherence of every British Government, from the Coalition of 1918 to the re-elected National Government of 1935.

‘For reasons which it is not proposed here to explore,

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that policy is at an end. Collective security has been tried and has been found wanting. The League of Nations has ceased to play an important part in the affairs of Europe, and when the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs recently announced in the House of Commons that it was the intention of the Government to rebuild the League, the remark was greeted with what is described in the Press as "ironical cheers".

'Upon what, then, is the foreign policy of the present Government based? This is surely a legitimate inquiry. It can no longer be based upon the League, for the League, by the Government's own admission, is in ruins, and the phrase "collective security" has gone out of circulation.

'To the student of history there would appear to be two alternatives — either isolation or alliances. For a self-contained country, such as Russia, able to rely almost entirely upon her own resources, and without any possessions overseas, isolation is a policy which has much to recommend it, but it is extremely doubtful whether it would prove practicable for an island State with possessions in every continent, and compelled to rely upon commerce for its prosperity and upon seaborne supplies for its existence.

'Isolation would also demand the denunciation of many treaty obligations, some of them only recently undertaken. Not to mention our ancient alliance with Portugal, we have treaties with Irak and with Egypt, we have obligations under the Treaty of Locarno to France and to Germany, and the present Government have recently incurred a new commitment with regard to the

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frontiers of Czechoslovakia. This latest development, even if it stood alone, must shut the door upon isolation as a possible policy for the present emergency.

‘We are left, therefore, with the alternative of alliances, which means binding yourself to friends, whose interests are similar to your own, in order to protect those interests if they are attacked.

‘England has had many allies in her long history. To enumerate them would be to make a list of nations from which there would be few exceptions. But study of that list in the light of history would reveal that there has been ever present an abiding principle that has directed England in her choice of friends.

‘From Tudor times, when England first acquired the status of a world Power, until the present day, she has sought neither to dominate the world herself nor to allow any other Power to dominate it. Whoever appeared to be advancing by methods of aggression towards the goal of domination was ever an object of suspicion to British statesmen.

‘Whether it were Spain, or France, or Russia, or Prussia, whose star appeared temporarily to be in the ascendant, the principle of British policy remained the same. That principle directed our choice of allies towards the less powerful and the more peaceful nations in order to strengthen their powers of resistance, to prevent them from being cowed into submission and to enable them to maintain their independence in the face of a too powerful foe.

‘That principle — the maintenance of a balance of power — has been the solid basis of the foreign policy of this country for 400 years.

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'British subjects are now anxious to know whether, collective security having been abandoned, Great Britain is prepared to return to the policy of the balance of power. If not, we must be told what is to take its place. A country without a foreign policy, be it ever so powerful, is as helpless as a rudderless ship.

'We cannot accept the word "appeasement" as a substitute for a policy. According to the dictionary, the word means to soothe or to satisfy — but there are passions ablaze in Europe to-day that cannot be soothed by gentle gestures or kind words; there are appetites aroused that no concessions will satisfy.

'Never before has the sentiment of alarm been so widely spread nor so profoundly felt. The anxious nations still look with lingering hopes toward Great Britain for support and leadership. Some sign of both should be given them without delay. It is not yet too late, but anxiety is beginning to turn into despair, and the days are numbered.'

The second article was called 'Wanted — an Army':

'For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that,

An' "Chuck him out, the brute!"

But it's "Saviour of his country"

When the guns begin to shoot.' — Kipling.

'From the days of Canute to those of Kipling, the English people have looked with distrust upon a standing army. Again and again they have been caught without one, have been compelled to improvise in haste in order to meet an unexpected demand, have wasted lives and money owing to lack of preparation, have escaped defeat through good luck and stout hearts rather than through

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military training or political foresight, and, having so escaped, have heaved a sigh of relief and proceeded without loss of time to disband the forces to which they owed their salvation.

'The lack of land frontiers has encouraged us to take the risk of dispensing with land forces. Wind, weather and seamanship have more than once delivered us from paying the penalty. The elements have fought for us, but in two great crises of our history the elements alone might have been insufficient without the assistance of a Drake and a Nelson.

'So we muddle on, confidently relying upon an unflinching measure of good luck and an inexhaustible supply of naval genius, and while the whole world is preparing for war, the emotions of the House of Commons can only be roused to fever heat by a Milk Bill.

'The mind of the country seems resolutely opposed to facing the facts of the situation. A series of diplomatic disasters has shaken only temporarily the imperturbability of the British people. Each time that their slumbers have been disturbed by a painful jolt, those who are set in authority over them have felt it their duty to lull them to sleep again as quickly as possible.

'If there had been a whisper that all was not well with the Navy, they would have woken up with a start and would have stayed awake. Doubts about the Air Force have threatened to produce insomnia and have left behind them most uncomfortable dreams. But nobody bothers about the Army save in so far as it is responsible for the guns to keep away the air raids so that we may all sleep sound in our beds.

'Now and then some restless spirit may be disturbed

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on learning that in September Czechoslovakia had between thirty-five and forty well-equipped divisions ready to take the field, whereas Great Britain had only two which were by no means ready.

‘But there are experts willing to set at rest any disquiet to which such information may have given rise. Czechoslovakia had no navy, it will be explained, whereas we have the finest navy in the world. Sea power has always been the deciding factor in the past. Air power may prove to be the deciding factor in the future. As for an army, we only need one to police the Empire, and the army that we have is adequate for the purpose.

‘No nation can be expected to maintain a first-rate navy and air force, together with a first-rate army. So doubts are set at rest and sleep returns.

‘But all these arguments are false. Sea power is, of course, vital to an island state, and in a world war its importance cannot be exaggerated. But there have been Continental wars in which it played no part. In the long struggle against Napoleon the sea supremacy of England was established at Trafalgar in 1805, but ten years divide Trafalgar from Waterloo.

‘Admiral of the Fleet, Lord Chatfield, speaking recently in the House of Lords in support of the Munich Agreement, laid emphasis on the statement that the Navy’s powers were limited to blockade, which would only prove effective over a period of years.

‘The word “defence” has come to play so large a part in our vocabulary that there is a danger lest we think of war in terms of defence only. When war breaks out, what matters most is to win it — and victory will never come through defensive measures. The Navy can

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save us from defeat, but the Navy alone cannot secure victory.

‘The Air Force is a new form of artillery, the most mobile and effective artillery ever invented. But artillery can only destroy: it cannot take possession. Artillery can flatten the fortifications, but until the garrison is driven out or has surrendered, the stronghold, though in ruins, remains unconquered. After the artillery has knocked down, the infantry has to walk in.

‘In only one way could action by the air force prove decisive. Such suffering might be inflicted upon the civilian population that they would compel the Government to capitulate.

‘Those who think this likely, base their faith upon the cowardice of civilians and the weakness of Ministers. Personally I do not believe in it. I believe, on the contrary, that if on the first night of war, as many fear, thousands of civilians were massacred by air attack, the reaction of our people would be a grim determination never to make peace with such an enemy save upon our own terms. The rush would be, not to the country, but to the recruiting offices.

‘Grateful as the Government would naturally be to witness such a display of patriotism, their gratitude might be followed by embarrassment if they had no equipment with which to provide the recruits, nor sufficient non-commissioned officers to train them.

‘Should such an eventuality arise, to what extent would the Government be justified in putting forward the plea that they could not have expected it?

‘In the first place, it should be plain that if Great Britain is forced to enter into a war upon which the

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existence of the Empire and the future of civilization must depend, she will not be able to preserve the principle of limited liability.

‘When the whole of Europe is in arms, we cannot have half the youth of England walking the streets in plain clothes. The majority will demand to fight, the minority will be compelled to. But we cannot build ships fast enough to send them all to sea nor sufficient airplanes to set them on wings. It will be only as soldiers that they can serve, and it will be as soldiers that their services will be most urgently needed.

‘It may be that on the other side of the Channel, against a nation of 80 millions, there will be one of 40 millions fighting for the same cause as ourselves. Is it conceivable that we shall send them no assistance, or that we shall limit that assistance to an air force and two divisions?

‘One thing is certain. If there is a European war we shall need an army. We do not need a vast conscript force in peace time, but by insisting on a certain measure of military training and by preparing the necessary equipment we could make certain of being able to put into the field a respectable army of at least ten or twelve divisions within a month or two of the outbreak of war.

‘At present, even the very small army that we have is miserably below establishment. A record year in recruiting, stimulated by the crisis and by the unflagging efforts of the Secretary of State for War, has hardly made an impression on the shortage. The numbers to-day are insufficient to garrison the Empire, to meet minor emergencies such as Palestine, and to provide adequate training at home.

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‘Nor is there any reason to suppose that the recent improvement in recruiting, which has been largely due to lowering the standard of fitness, will be continued.

‘This situation would be serious even if there were no possibility of a major war. It is not being rectified, because it cannot be so long as the voluntary principle is retained. The fact should be faced that no preparations are being made in peace time to produce the kind of army that we should need in war.

‘Readers of history in the future will rub their eyes with astonishment when they learn that at the end of the fateful year 1938, the small British army was 23,000 short of its exiguous establishment and that at the same time there were nearly 2,000,000 unemployed in the land. And nothing was done about it.’

It was about this time that I met again Count Coudenhove-Kalergi whom I had seen only once previously, some fifteen years before. I had known then that he was working on plans for the federation of European nations which was known as the Pan Europa movement, and that he had gained the support of no less a person than Aristide Briand who was then at the height of his power. I had vaguely classed this movement in my mind with the various other idealistic and impractical schemes for ensuring international peace, all of which seemed to be now consigned to limbo as a result of the advent and the repeated successes of power politics. Almost my first words, therefore, at our second meeting were to suggest that I supposed he retained little hope now of carrying out his scheme for a united Europe. ‘On the contrary’, he replied quietly, ‘Pan Europa was never so certain as it is to-day. Europe will certainly

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become united in the near future. The only question now is whether the union is brought about by force under the control of Germany or whether it comes about by agreement and good will under the moral leadership of England and France. All the smaller nations would prefer the latter solution, which would allow them to retain their freedom and independence, but since Munich, they have begun to doubt whether England and France have the power or the will to protect them and therefore they are inclined to make the best bargain that they can with Germany before it is too late.'

I was much impressed by the views that he expressed, by his grasp of the European situation and by the practical character of his programme. I had recently read his latest book, and I made it the subject of my weekly article on December 20th under the title of 'The New Idolatry'.

'Of many books it is said that everybody should read them. But everybody is very busy and most of the books that contain an important message are very long.

'In the modern world, which some people wrongly believe to be divided between Communists and Fascists, there are two books which would appear to have had an outstanding effect upon opinion.

'Yet it would be interesting to know how many Communists have read *Das Kapital* and how many National Socialists have read *Mein Kampf* from cover to cover..

'Such statistics are unfortunately unobtainable, but writing as one who has made a conscientious effort to master both these works, I venture to believe that among those who are ready to die for the principles laid down

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in them the percentage of those who have actually read them is very small.

'Now a book has appeared of first-rate importance which delivers its whole message in under two hundred well printed pages. The message is one which the world is longing for, because it contains the logical foundations of that faith in which most men instinctively, if sub-consciously believe, and which emphatically condemns the errors of Communism and of Fascism.

'The book is called *The Totalitarian State Against Man*, and the author is Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi.

'Never before, so far as I am aware, have the Far East and Central Europe combined to produce a remarkable man. Count Coudenhove-Kalergi's father was descended from an ancient family of Flemish origin, settled for many centuries in Bohemia and was serving in the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic service when he met and married a Japanese lady.

'The Count is thus enabled to bring to the contemplation of modern problems not only the bitter experience of one who grew up in post-war Europe but also the vast accumulations of learning that are stored in the treasure houses of the East.

'He is able to remind us that a Chinese idealist, Wang Mang, introduced Socialism into China more than two thousand years ago with such disastrous results that the Chinese have never tried it again. And he is able to suggest to us that in matters of cleanliness and politeness Europe has still something to learn from Japan.

'The main thesis of this short book may be summed up in a few words. The State was made by man as an instrument for his own protection and development.

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Without the advantages that the State provides man cannot hope to reach his full stature. The object and purpose of the State is the production of the highest type of individual.

'False doctrine has led man to mistake what is really a means to a certain end for the end itself. As so often in the past, man has come to worship his own handiwork, to make a master out of what was designed to be a servant, to set up the State as something holy and worshipful and to sacrifice himself and his fellows at the altar of this new idolatry.

'The author does not under-rate the importance of the State, but he insists upon the limits of that importance. It is not at the perfect State that we should aim but at the perfect human being and because the Totalitarian State cramps and confines the growth and liberty of human beings, it is the enemy of the highest hopes of civilization.

'In remarkably few words, and with commendable clarity, the author distinguishes between different types of totalitarian States and explores their genesis.

'The origin of evil was the class war, out of which sprang Communism, and Communism produced the Soviet Government, which is still the most detestable tyranny of all. It was the not unjustifiable fear of Communism that produced the reaction of Fascism.

'In the clash of these two movements freedom perished. Nor was it by chance or oversight that freedom was destroyed.

'As ever, it was the blindness and folly of man that were the cause of his own misfortunes. In the violence of class warfare, the Communist did not care if he lost his

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liberty so long as he destroyed his neighbour's property, and the Fascist parted regretfully with his freedom in return for a somewhat doubtful certificate of his right to retain his belongings.

'Those who framed the French Revolutionary slogan, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, failed to understand that liberty and equality are, owing to the imperfections of humanity, incompatible with one another.

'Abolish all distinctions and give to every man the same wage; in a few weeks, if men are left to themselves, there will be rich and poor, masters and servants. Some men are wise and others foolish, some save money, others spend it, some by nature take the lead and others follow.

'Plant bulbs and sow seeds of the same size, some plants will grow taller than others. The only way of keeping them level is periodically to cut off the heads of the taller — a system which the Soviet Government seems to be following, but which, it is to be hoped, can hardly continue indefinitely.

'Count Coudenhove-Kalergi believes that it will not continue, and for this reason he is able to close on a note of optimism. States must be founded on Right as well as upon Might. If they lack either the one or the other they are doomed to destruction.

'The League of Nations failed because it had no Might to maintain the Right which it stood for. The totalitarian State must fail also because it is without Right.

'The overthrow of the Soviet regime through a Capitalist crusade would, however, be an irremediable catastrophe because it would enable Marxists to maintain

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for centuries that Bolshevism was destroyed by force just when it was about to justify its existence. It must be allowed to perish of its congenital diseases.

'The Count believes that "as the birth of Fascism followed the birth of Bolshevism, so the end of Fascism will follow the end of Bolshevism. It will have fulfilled its mission. The twilight of the totalitarian State has set in".'

'But we must see to it that we profit by experience and gain something from the lesson so painfully learnt. The class warfare was born in poverty and slavery, and until we get rid of these the class warfare will be always with us.

'It is possible to abolish poverty and slavery in the modern world not by old-fashioned theories of Socialism but by modern methods of production. Technical knowledge provides the key to improved conditions. Owing to the inventions of science, man can now produce all that he needs in abundance, without working for hours and in conditions which render life intolerable.

'Aristotle wrote that slavery must continue unless machinery could do the work of the slaves. That machinery has been invented, and its invention should prove the true charter of liberty.

'Technical knowledge, however, must be accompanied by a spiritual awakening which will enable men to employ it to its greatest value. That greatest value is not the making of money but the improvement of life. A new fraternal revolution is demanded which will animate the minds of men with good will towards their fellows.

'The conclusion at which this author of Flemish-

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Austro-Hungarian-Japanese origin, writing in the German language, arrives, is that "the world need not despair so long as at the helm, a nation is keeping watch which has clung passionately to personal freedom for nearly one thousand years. Its spirit watches on the North Sea and on all the shores of the world's oceans. It is the spirit of Athens, of freedom and of personality to which the greater half of humanity to-day does homage."

'No nobler compliment was ever paid to the people of Great Britain. May we prove worthy of it.'

The close of the year was marked by a curious incident the details of which have never been made public. It appears that three junior Ministers conveyed to the Prime Minister the disquiet that they felt with regard to the personnel then composing the Cabinet. They named certain Ministers whom they considered unfit for their offices, and intimated that unless changes were made, they could not continue at their posts. The Prime Minister listened to their spokesman patiently and was apparently impressed because shortly afterwards, very important changes were made in the Cabinet and of the three Ministers who had complained of their seniors two remained in office.

About the same time a speech was made by the Lord Chancellor, which I am afraid roused my anger, both on private and public grounds. He began by a very violent attack on Mr. Winston Churchill for daring to criticize the policy of the Prime Minister, and he went on to sneer at those who he said, not content with criticizing the Prime Minister at home, had even ventured to do so when speaking in foreign countries. As I had been

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speaking in Paris the previous week it seemed that I was the person indicated, although I had been most careful not to say one word derogatory of Mr. Chamberlain.

The remainder of Lord Maugham's speech was devoted to proving the fearful losses that a war would entail and to justifying the policy of Munich on the ground that we could not have faced such losses. He said that we ought to consider those possible losses before supporting a policy that might lead to war and that the men who did not, ought to be either shot or hanged. No sane man, of course, will ever support any policy without considering whither it will lead and what the result may be. It was plain that Lord Maugham was thinking of certain people who, he suggested, did not count the cost and that the people aimed at were Mr. Churchill and myself. This I resented, and I also deplored the suggestion which had never before been made by any other member of the Cabinet, that the Munich policy had been dictated by fear of war and by lack of adequate preparations to meet it. I had thought that I was only doing justice to my former colleagues when, as has already been seen, I denounced this theory in the House of Commons, and I therefore regretted that one of themselves should have revived it.

My last article of the year, entitled 'The New Impeachment', dealt with these two incidents:

'Here is the season of peace on earth and goodwill towards men, but neither peace nor goodwill seem to be flourishing in Government circles.

'First we have the Lord Chancellor, the oldest member of the Cabinet and the most exalted, advocating the

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infliction of the extreme penalty of the law on all those who disagree with views that he expresses with a violence rarely equalled by holders of his august office, then we have the unprecedented spectacle of junior Ministers demanding the heads of their seniors as a condition of their continued adherence.

‘These are strange portents and although they may be soon forgotten, so rapidly do events of importance now succeed one another, it may nevertheless be well to pause and consider what are the causes that produce such remarkable effects.

‘In the first place it must be admitted that political feeling is running high and that it is not running in normal party channels. A Lord Chancellor — even one completely lacking in political experience — does not lightly declare that people should be shot or hanged for offences which have never figured in the criminal code of any civilized country. Nor do young Ministers take their political lives in their hands and risk the lasting hostility of some of their senior colleagues unless they are convinced that there is something at stake of far greater importance than political promotion.

‘If the Lord Chancellor’s speech is to be taken seriously it must be interpreted as expressing the view that so dangerous are the times in which we are living that they would justify the revival of a practice by which statesmen who were adjudged guilty of misconducting the affairs of the State expiated that crime upon the scaffold.

‘The constitutional method of procedure was impeachment, the more arbitrary, although also constitutional, was by bill of attainder.

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'In cases of impeachment the House of Commons were the accusers and the House of Lords were the judges. But events of the last weeks seem to suggest that a new form of impeachment is developing in which the accusers are the Junior Ministers and the judge is the Head of the Government.

'It is odd that so soon after the Lord Chancellor's appeal to violence should have come this onslaught upon some of his most important colleagues — an onslaught which may, if rumour proves correct — bring about ultimately his own removal from the Woolsack.

'Criticism of senior officers by junior officers is a serious matter and it is generally to be discouraged and deplored. It can be justified only by exceptional circumstances and by deep conviction.

'The position of a Junior Minister in our Parliamentary system is a difficult one. Except in very rare cases he is not consulted at all about the direction of policy, for which he bears some share of responsibility. He cannot speak in the House of Commons except on the affairs of his own department.

'If he has doubts or seeks information, he cannot, like a private member, put down a question, and yet when he speaks to his constituents he has to watch his remarks as carefully as a Cabinet Minister for fear of a question from the Opposition as to whether what he has said represents accurately the policy of His Majesty's Government.

'It is therefore not surprising that Junior Ministers should occasionally grow impatient, especially when they have been exercising their subordinate functions for many years, are no longer in their first youth and

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entertain sincere doubts which they find are shared by many of their fellow members as to the infallible wisdom and super-efficiency of their leaders.

‘What has driven these Ministers to the extreme step they are reported to have taken — namely, to representing their grievances to the Prime Minister and to demanding a reconstruction of the administration?’

‘It was not, we are assured, the Munich agreement. That they swallowed — with how many wry faces, with what coughs and chokings, we cannot tell. But swallowed it was, and we can therefore rest assured that the source of their discontent is what has happened since. And what is that?’

‘First, the policy of appeasement has so far failed. This does not mean that it is necessarily doomed to ultimate failure, but merely that it has not yet been favoured by any signs of success. And nothing could prove more fatal to its hopes of final success than refusal to face this fact which is staring the world in the face.

‘Whether it be possible to appease dictators remains an open question, but that they have not been appeased up to date is a matter of fact. From Hitler’s very first speech after Munich, in which he declared, within ten days of his meeting with Mr. Chamberlain, that Signor Mussolini was his only real friend, down to the most recent demands of Italy for the cession of Tunis, Corsica and Nice, there has not appeared a single solitary sign in either country of a more reasonable, conciliatory or pacific outlook upon foreign affairs.

‘Those who had hoped for better things are naturally disappointed, but those who approved of the Munich agreement cannot blame the Government if better

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things have not eventuated, for those who approved of it shared the responsibility as they shared the high hopes and the loud cheers.

'But there were many who, while hoping and cheering, felt convinced that no time should be lost in making certain preparations in case their hopes should prove false and their cheers premature.

'They realized that at Munich the democracies had lost one of the best equipped armies and one of the strongest lines of defence in Europe, and they thought that some steps should be taken to make good so serious a loss.

'They were encouraged when the Chancellor of the Exchequer demanded a "vigorous, complete, remorseless, urgent survey of the whole position", and they were delighted when the First Lord of the Admiralty told the House of Lords that while there had been delay in the past due to control of finance, "that was all being dealt with differently now and there is no delay from that quarter".

'They welcomed the appointment of the Lord Privy Seal to deal with Air Raid Precautions and to organize the man power of the nation.

'But what has happened? There has been no survey such as Sir John Simon demanded. Treasury control over all expenditure by the Service departments continues to be exercised in exactly the same manner as of old in spite of Lord Stanhope's assurances.

'The demand for a Ministry of Supply has been refused and Sir John Anderson, in spite of the expressed opinions of 56 Conservative members of Parliament, and in spite of his own conviction that a compulsory register would be

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necessary in war, is solemnly engaged upon compiling a register on a voluntary basis. Nor is there any indication whatever that the sea or land forces of the Crown are to be increased beyond what was considered the irreducible minimum in 1935 when the last inquiry was held.

‘Since then the international situation has deteriorated enormously to the disadvantage of Great Britain. Senior Ministers do not seem to realize the fearful implication of these undeniable facts. Junior Ministers who fought in the last war and who are more closely in touch with the lives and opinions of the people cannot remain blind to truths which are writ so large all over the face of the earth. They have made their protest. Whatever their contemporaries may think to-day, posterity will honour them for having done so.

‘They have understood — what the country is beginning to understand — that we are living in the shadow of a terrible menace. We must prepare to meet it.

‘If the policy of appeasement proves successful — and we must all hope and pray that it will — nobody will grudge the money that will have been spent upon preparation for the awful alternative.

‘But if that policy fails and those preparations have not been made, then there may be many who will demand that the men who have been guilty of neglect shall pay even those penalties which the present Lord Chancellor has suggested.’

CHAPTER V

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AT the beginning of the New Year I endeavoured to sum up the record of 1938. I did my best to make this summing up impartial and re-reading it in the light of subsequent events, I can find nothing to add upon the credit side. The Anglo-Italian Agreement which I then included in that column has proved worthless, and it is doubtful whether the Prime Minister's popularity in Germany has survived the torrent of Nazi propaganda to which it has been subjected.

'At the beginning of this year 1939, the whole world is longing for peace, but because of the ambitions of two men the whole world is apprehensive of war. This astonishing fact is a remarkable commentary on — if it is not a complete condemnation of — our civilization. Let us realize the truth of it now at the turn of the year and let us add up our accounts in order to estimate our hopes for the future.

'The debit column shall come first, and must contain a dismal list of the successes won in 1938 by the powers of aggression. Early in the year came the resignation of Mr. Eden from the National Government. Unfortunately, it coincided with a violent personal attack upon him by Herr Hitler.

'Although we in this country are aware that the connection of the two events was purely fortuitous, it

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enabled the German press to announce that "the Führer speaks and Eden goes", and there were public rejoicings throughout Italy.

'It was felt in Europe that the Dictators had scored a point, and while it would be false to suggest that they had directly brought about Mr. Eden's retirement, it is true to say that the foreign policy of Great Britain was henceforward to be less resolutely opposed to their demands.

'The following month saw the destruction of Austrian independence and the transference of a population of nearly seven millions to the Nazi Reich. This violent act was completed during a week-end without any previous consultation with, or subsequent explanation to the Powers of Europe. The increase that it gave to the power and prestige of Germany was enormous.

'Two months later it appeared that a similar blow was meditated against Czechoslovakia. For reasons which history will reveal, that blow, if then intended, was not then struck.

'The French and British Press, with perhaps excessive enthusiasm, acclaimed a victory for the democracies. How far such a claim was justified may be doubtful, but the fact that it was made, determined Herr Hitler upon a policy of revenge for a reverse, whether real or imaginary, and sealed the fate of Czechoslovakia.

'As for what happened at the end of September, it may perhaps be best summarized by a recent statement by the Berlin correspondent of *The Times*: "It is of course Herr Hitler's view that no amount of American and British rearmament can offset the strategical advantage which the Reich obtained through the Czechoslovak settlement."

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‘The events of the last three months have not justified the hopes of those who anticipated a slackening of tension, a calming of tempers and the cessation of international surprises and territorial demands. The language of German spokesmen has grown more intemperate and the violence and brutality of their internal regime have increased.

‘Some of the worst features of it are now being imitated by Italy, who has brought down the curtain on a tragic year by making demands for the cession of territory which she knows cannot be met and which have received the support and approval of Germany.

‘Meanwhile the wars in Spain and the Far East continue. Foreign intervention in the former, one of the principal causes of international anxiety, has not ceased, and the Foreign Secretary has stated that — so far as Italy is concerned — it is not likely to cease until it has proved successful.

‘Both wars are being conducted with a ferocity rarely surpassed in any previous period of history, and the bombing of civilian populations from the air has been so frequent that it must now be regarded as a normal practice in modern warfare.

‘The credit column opens with the Anglo-Italian Agreement and closes with the Anglo-American commercial treaty. Unfortunately, the hopes of permanent improvement in our relations with Italy to which the former gave rise have been damped, if not destroyed, by the Italian demands on France referred to above. There can be no friendship with Italy at the expense of France.

‘The treaty with the United States, however, is an

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achievement of lasting value, and to it must be added the continually increasing interest with which the people of the United States are contemplating the plight of the European democracies.

'So far as the German menace is concerned, it should be remembered that increase of territory and of manpower does not necessarily mean a *pro tanto* increase of strength.

'The easy-going and pleasure-loving Austrian is already learning to loathe the stern and gloomy tyranny of the Nazis, and the large Czech population that has been forced to accept the hated domination of Germany will prove a liability to their rulers in the future as they have always proved in the past.

'It may also be permitted to one who has been an outspoken critic of the Munich agreement from the first to draw attention to one aspect of it which has already produced satisfactory results and may continue to do so.

'The people of Germany had been deluded into the belief that England and France were seeking to encircle and eventually destroy them. That was made the excuse for the sacrifices demanded of them such as the substitution of guns for butter as an article of diet.

'The myth was exploded at Munich. The most gullible of people could no longer be persuaded that Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier were out for their blood. Hitler was not slow to realize the ground he had lost, and it is significant that in the first speech that he made after Munich he tried to recover it by explaining to his audience that Mr. Chamberlain's tenure of power was precarious and that at any moment he might be succeeded by a more bellicose administration, the fear

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of which must justify the continuance and increase of German rearmament.

'This ingenious attempt to recreate the false beliefs so industriously spread can hardly have proved convincing and the growth of internal discontent in Germany may be a proof of its failure.

'Herr Hitler's reluctance to make any friendly or flattering reference to the Prime Minister since their last meeting may be further explained on personal grounds. Inordinately vain, he found himself for the first time no longer in the centre of the stage, because in Germany no less than in France and England Mr. Chamberlain was the hero of the peace.

'Robbed of his beloved limelight, the Führer has had resort to ill-conditioned gibes at the "umbrella" type of politician, although it is difficult to understand why one who in four and a half years of active service never rose above the rank of lance-corporal should sneer at civilians or be particularly proud to strut about in a quasi-military uniform of his own creation.

'Increased violence of language from press and platform, increased disregard for moderate opinion and a noticeable increase in the tempo of events are all symptoms of a growing uneasiness.

'Apart from the discontent that is due to harsher conditions of life and higher taxation, there is reported to be growing among the thinking population of Germany grave disquiet at the methods that are being pursued and their effect upon the mind of foreign nations.

'The robbery of the Jews, rendered necessary by the state of the country's finances, the failure of Dr. Schacht's attempt to induce Great Britain to grant Germany a

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pecuniary reward for having inflicted upon the world the fearful problem of finding homes and sustenance for thousands of starving refugees, the horror expressed throughout the United States at deeds so incompatible with any principles of civilized humanity — all these things which are beginning to get known in spite of a muzzled press are shaking the foundations of Nazidom.

‘While such developments give ground for hope that internal conditions may produce a more reasonable outlook, that ground is not sufficiently solid for any policy to be based on it. The result may be the opposite to what is desired. Too often in history have Dictators sought to cure discontent at home by adventures abroad. A lean tiger is more likely to spring than a fat one.

‘Upon one event in the year 1938 we can look back with sentiments of unmingled satisfaction. The visit of the King and Queen to Paris was something very much more than a state function.

‘Owing mainly to the personalities of their Majesties, it produced an effect upon the people not only of Paris, but of the whole of France, which it would be difficult to describe. It cemented an international friendship and set a personal seal to the bond which holds together for good or ill the two champions of liberty and standard bearers of civilization in Europe.’

As stated in a previous chapter, the events of 1938 had made me doubtful as to whether the constitutional methods of the eighteenth century were entirely suitable for dealing with the problems of the twentieth. While no constructive effort was being made to reform our constitution and bring it up to date, it seemed to me that

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there was a growing danger of the party system breaking down, and of the collapse of parliamentary institutions. To meet this menace I thought that one or two methods might be adopted, either an effort might be made to revive the party system and make of it a reality rather than a sham, or else there might be formed in order to deal with the immediate situation, a true coalition of all parties.

I therefore wrote two articles on this subject:

‘It now seems certain that unless some major catastrophe takes place in the interval, there will be a General Election in the spring or the autumn. Before that election takes place the Prime Minister must decide upon what platform he will go to the country.

‘It will then be eight years since the National Government was formed in order to meet an emergency. It was, when formed, a genuine coalition. A Government that included Lord Hailsham, Lord Samuel and Lord Snowden was a Government of men sincerely holding profoundly different political views, who were willing to co-operate temporarily in order to surmount a crisis.

‘One of two things must ultimately happen to such a Coalition. It must either break up or settle down. The differences of opinion that divide its members must either render prolonged co-operation impossible or they must disappear. They have done the latter. The three statesmen referred to above—a true Tory, a true Liberal and a true Socialist—have all left. What remains is, no doubt, an excellent Government and all the better for the fact that it is of one mind. Nobody really believes that Sir John Simon is more of a Liberal than Sir

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Samuel Hoare, and it is betraying no secrets to state that the harmony of the Cabinet has never been disturbed by the socialistic opinions of Mr. Malcolm MacDonald or Earl De La Warr.

‘The Conservative Party has a wonderful digestion. This is not the first time that it has swallowed its opponents and assimilated them. In the eighties of the last century, the Liberal Unionists proved quite a mouthful. Yet down they all went and none of them came up again. A similar fate has befallen the National Liberal and the National Labour Parties.

‘Nobody can claim to-day that it is possible to detect the slightest difference of views in the election addresses of candidates belonging to these three branches of the National Government, and the only difference in the letters of encouragement that they receive from their respective leaders is the signature at the end. The National Labour Party, which was once a genuine home for those who had lost their causes, has now become a lodging house for the unemployed, of whom it can at least be said that they are genuinely seeking jobs.

‘But is there any harm, it may be asked, in retaining labels even if they have lost their meaning? There is. In these days, when parliamentary institutions are discredited in the greater part of the world, it is of the first importance that where they are retained they should be entitled to and should receive respect. To perpetuate a sham is to risk the forfeiture of respect. National Liberalism and National Labour which were perfectly genuine in their origin, have now become unrealities.

‘In every great party there must be different shades of

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opinion, and such difference of shades exists to-day among the Government's supporters, but it is not reflected in the party labels. The so-called Liberal and Labour members of the coalition do not even represent the left wing of the Conservative Party. They include many admirable Members of Parliament, but they represent nothing and the sooner that plain fact is faced the better.

'If objection be taken by some of the Government's supporters to the name of "Conservative" which has never been an altogether fortunate one, they can adopt that of "National" — a broad blanket which will cover everyone.

'It may be said that no party has the right to assume an adjective which should apply to all, but we have had the example set us by the Socialists who have usurped the proud name of Labour, to which they have no better claim than their political opponents.

'In addition to the advantage that must naturally accrue from getting rid of an unreality, one important gain that would arise from the sinking of these purely imaginary differences would be the freeing of the Prime Minister's hands in the selection of his colleagues. At present he cannot appoint an Under Secretary without going into an abstruse mathematical calculation in order to be sure that the National Liberals and the National Labourites are maintaining their correct percentage of representation. Many appointments have been due to the necessity of meeting these claims. And they have not been the best appointments.

'Before, however, the Prime Minister decides to go to the country at the head of a homogeneous body of

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supporters, holding one faith, maintaining one cause and called by one name, he has an alternative course of conduct which he should seriously consider.

'The coalition of 1931 was formed in order to face a serious financial situation. The opinion may well be held that the situation in which the country finds itself to-day is far more serious than that of 1931. The danger then was bankruptcy, to-day it is destruction. It may well therefore be asked whether this is the time to fight a General Election upon party lines; whether this is the time to divide rather than to unite the nation.

'When the Prime Minister returned from Munich there were some who hoped that he might consider it a suitable opportunity to make an appeal for national unity and to invite the leaders of other parties to join with him in a reconstructed and truly national Government. He refrained from doing so and he was doubtless right. The difficulties at that time would have been very great and failure then would have rendered success later more doubtful. Those who were bitterly criticizing the Munich Agreement could hardly, on the day after its signature, come into coalition with the man who had signed it.

'But months have passed and it is now admitted even by members of the Government that the events that have followed upon Munich have proved profoundly disappointing. The time for recriminations has passed and it might now be possible to find a basis of agreement between parties. No difference of opinion can exist as to the gravity of the situation. No difference of opinion should exist as to the steps that must be taken to meet it. Which step to take first and the length of the stride are

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of course matters for discussion, but not it might be thought, matters that should be debated at the hustings.

'Genuine differences of political thought certainly do divide the three parties now represented in the House of Commons. But such differences are neither more genuine nor more profound than those which eight years ago divided Lord Hailsham, Lord Samuel and Lord Snowden. If war broke out to-morrow all difference would disappear by midday. Must we await the catastrophe in order to apply the cure? Nor is anything more likely to avert that catastrophe than the spectacle of Great Britain's united determination to resist it.

'If Mr. Chamberlain decides to ask for the support of those only who can give unqualified approval of his every action and unlimited confidence in his unflinching wisdom, he will probably obtain a working majority, but it will be smaller than that enjoyed by either of his two predecessors and at a time when the need for national unity is greater. If, on the other hand, he appeals to his opponents to share with him the ever growing burden of responsibility, to forget the past in the dire need of the present and in firm defiance of the future, then there awaits him such a part to play in English history as has been given to few.

'He already enjoys a larger following in the country and a stronger position in the House of Commons than Mr. Ramsay MacDonald had in 1931 or than Mr. Asquith had in 1915. His opportunity also is greater than theirs. Will he take it?"

* * * *

'There is no more remarkable phenomenon in post-war British politics than the failure of the Labour Party.

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To what causes must it be attributed? It is now fifteen years since the first Labour Government was formed, and it then seemed certain that Labour was destined to inherit the position in the State hitherto occupied by the Liberal Party. Since then it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the Labour Party has made no progress whatever.

‘At repeated General Elections they have failed to obtain an independent majority and at the by-elections that have taken place during the last three and a half years, whatever fate has befallen the Government candidate the Labour figures have remained obstinately stationary.

‘Yet it was surely to be expected that in a country where all men and women have the vote and where the great majority of voters are very poor, a party which is largely composed of working men, which professes to have the cause of the working man closest to its heart, and which has never been shy of making attractive promises, would rapidly acquire a following large enough to give it at least a temporary victory over all competitors.

‘Sound Parliamentary institutions demand a powerful opposition and a possible alternative Government. For this reason the incompetence of the Labour Party in recent years has been a source of weakness to Great Britain.

‘In moments when political philosophy takes the place of party politics in our minds this is a fact which we are all willing to admit, but as the date of the General Election draws near we cannot overcome the inclination to rejoice at the misfortunes of our opponents or

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resist the temptation to do all in our power to increase their embarrassment.

‘We are like Eton boys who are prepared to agree in theory that it would be a good thing if Harrow were sometimes to prove victorious at cricket, but who, on the morning of the match, devoutly hope that this year Harrow will be soundly beaten.

‘The first cause of Labour’s failure is the fact that the party remains so firmly and faithfully wedded to Socialism.

‘When all the world was young — or, at least, when I was — Socialism made an attractive bride. She was young herself, she was very fashionable, she seemed likely to inherit great possessions, and it was whispered that she was rather wicked.

‘But now we have all known Socialism so long that she has lost her glamour. She has no future, but an ugly past. In Russia she has become criminal, in Germany she has turned nationalist, and in England she has just grown old and sour and dull.

‘An important rule in war is to avoid presenting your enemy with a target — give him nothing to aim at.

‘In politics the Government is obliged to present a series of targets to the enemy. Every measure they bring forward is something to aim at, and every world event can be turned into a target at which the Opposition can snipe from the trenches on the left of the Chair.

‘A wise Opposition confines itself to such activities and produces neither a programme nor a political theory, which can only give their opponents opportunity for counter-attack.

‘Socialism has proved an invaluable asset to the critics of the Labour Party. How often has the weary orator.

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towards the end of an electoral campaign, fallen back on a good rousing anti-Socialist speech.

'Socialism provides the widest target in the world and can be alleged to stand for almost anything from Free Trade to free love. Until Labour jettisons Socialism as completely as the Liberals have jettisoned *laissez-faire* they have little hope of capturing the electorate.

'Another cause of Labour's failure is lack of leadership and inferiority of personnel. We hear it frequently stated that all the clever young men at the universities are Socialists. But what happens to those clever young men when they go down? They never find their way into the House of Commons.

'Labour supporters are fond of sneering at the late Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. They should refrain from doing so until they have produced a single more distinguished political personality. His defection, together with that of the late Lord Snowden and Mr. J. H. Thomas, was a loss to the Labour Front Bench that has never been made good.

'The opposition which faces Mr. Chamberlain to-day in the House of Commons is less formidable than that which faced Lord Baldwin ten years ago.

'Yet the Labour Party chooses such a moment under the shadow of a General Election to expel not only from their General Staff but even from their ranks the most intelligent of their recruits and the one with the largest Socialist following in the country. And at the same time they rededicate themselves to all the outworn and unpopular shiboleths of Socialism.

'Human folly could hardly go further. It is as though a man were so set upon self-destruction that he took a

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double-barrelled gun to the task and pressed both triggers simultaneously.

'Sir Stafford Cripps is accused by his critics not only of refusing to obey orders blindly, but also of the graver offence of not saying exactly the same thing to-day as he used to say two or three years ago. But surely at a time when the whole world is in a state of revolution, when wars are being waged in two continents, when states that have lasted for a thousand years disappear overnight, surely at such a time a man may be permitted occasionally to change his mind.

'Front line fighters are faced by problems which never disturb the tranquillity of G.H.Q. and which often demand the sudden adoption of tactics which text-books have failed to anticipate.

'This brings us to the third main cause of the Labour Party's failure.

'The party is not a self-governing body. Those leaders who sit in the House of Commons direct neither the policy of the party, nor that of the principal newspaper which expounds it to the public.

'Behind them all the time, controlling the finances and pulling the strings, sits that formidable caucus, the T.U.C. A Parliamentary party which must take orders from a non-Parliamentary body is fighting at an immense disadvantage, like a man-of-war commanded from the shore instead of from the bridge.

'I remember pitying the position of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald during the days of the General Strike, when momentous decisions were being taken by the T.U.C., of which he, ex-Prime Minister and Leader of the Labour Party, was not even a member.

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‘Whatever critics may say of the House of Commons, it does remain a popular assembly in the true sense of the word, that is to say it keeps in touch with and reflects the varying moods and passions of the people. The men who work there must, therefore, be the best judges of political times and seasons and the importance of political personalities.

‘To rob them of control is to condemn them to frustration — to send them into battle with ropes round their necks, the other ends of which are held in Transport House.

‘Let the Labour Party abandon the stale dogmas of nineteenth-century Socialism, let them suppress the practice of heresy hunting, let them put the T.U.C. in its place and they may yet come to perform satisfactorily the responsible role of His Majesty’s Opposition.’

During these comparatively quiet weeks, there was time to think about internal affairs, to call attention to constitutional developments and to make suggestions with regard to certain administrative reforms. In articles that I wrote during the course of these three months, I insisted upon the need of increased propaganda. I suggested the need of some improvement in the organization of our diplomatic service, and I drew attention to what appeared an interesting although it may prove a temporary development in our Cabinet system, namely the replacement of the politician by the technician: ‘Propaganda’.

‘The most prominent Minister in Germany to-day is the Minister of Propaganda, and it is estimated by those who have studied the question very carefully that the German Government are spending upon propaganda

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something in the neighbourhood of £20,000,000 a year.

‘In Great Britain there is no Minister nor Ministry of Propaganda, and the sums that are being spent upon it — if any — are negligible. It is not intended here to criticize Germany for devoting so large a portion of her revenue to such a purpose. She is merely proving that she has appreciated the importance of a new form of activity that is playing an ever-increasing part in the modern world.

‘Advertisement and propaganda form the background of strident noise and glaring colours before which the melodrama of the twentieth century is performed. There is no escape from the one or the other. In the most retired and rural retreat the traveller will suddenly discover a notice board urging him to buy something that he does not want. In the most intimate conversations between old friends a note is suddenly struck, a phrase let fall, which reveals to the trained ear the presence of a carrier, or more often of a victim, of political propaganda.

‘If a friend were to tell you that in his opinion certain pills were so beneficial that they were worth a guinea a box, or that he always drank a certain beverage because he believed it to be good for him, you would notice that he had unconsciously succumbed to the wiles of advertisement.

‘Similarly, when the international situation is being discussed, as it so often is in these days, by people whose enthusiasm is greater than their information, a statement is frequently made or a view expressed which proves that the £20,000,000 a year has not been spent in vain.

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'Great are the powers of propaganda. To what extent we are ourselves the victims of it we cannot tell. It is very seldom that we consciously buy an object because we have read an advertisement recommending it. Yet nobody who is engaged in commerce will question the value of advertisement. This proves that we are buying things all the time, without knowing it, because we have seen them advertised.

'Advertising has become something between an art and a science. Every commercial firm sets aside annually large sums for expenditure on advertisement. A special staff of trained experts is employed for the purpose. High salaries are paid for such work and first class brains are engaged in it.

'In democratic countries the State usually lags behind private enterprise. It was private enterprise that created our Empire. The State rather reluctantly accepted it. In this matter of propaganda private enterprise again has led the way and it is time that the State followed.

'In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Europe was rent in two by differences of religion. A new faith was born which at first seemed to sweep all before it. The older faith, accustomed to unquestioned supremacy, was neither equipped nor prepared to defend itself. The new doctrines spread with astonishing rapidity until the old faith organized itself for defence and counter-attack.

'Then there came the rise of the Jesuits, and the Counter-Reformation. There was pitiless persecution, bitter hatred and bloody war until in the end both sides learnt that there was room for both Catholics and Protestants in Europe, since when they have lived side by side with one another and except in rare instances and

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remote countries their differences have never led to blows.

“Let my son read history”, wrote Napoleon in captivity, “it is the only true philosophy.” The wars of religion should teach us many things. First and foremost, that, if men had been as wise at the beginning of them as they were at the end, they need never have taken place. Secondly — and this also is an important lesson — that no faith is so firmly established that it need not defend itself. Thirdly, that in the struggle of ideas, as in the struggle between armed forces, the soundest method of defence is attack.

“We, who are now middle-aged, were brought up in a world where belief in the desirability of freedom and humanity and in the detestability of tyranny and torture seemed as firmly established as the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages.

“To our astonishment we have seen all the principles in which we believed, first called in question and then condemned. And now £20,000,000 a year is being spent by one country alone, and proportionally large sums by other countries, in order to eradicate from the minds of the coming generation, the misbegotten beliefs of their fathers.

“There are two sides to this powerful weapon of propaganda — the positive and the negative.

“The positive consists in spreading one doctrine, the negative consists in preventing the other doctrine from being heard — and it is perhaps the negative which is the more deadly of the two.

“To a generation that was brought up to believe that the freedom of the Press was one of the most universally

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recognized of the rights of man it is a sad and solemn thought, when looking round Europe, to reflect that such freedom has to-day been completely abolished in Russia, Germany — with all that Germany now includes — in Italy, Poland, Spain, Turkey, Greece, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Portugal and Czechoslovakia.

‘In these countries, the Governments themselves would not suggest that freedom of the Press either existed or was likely to be revived. And the evil is growing. In other countries, which it is better not to name, Government influence and control over the Press is gradually increasing, and since the agreement of Munich it has become extremely difficult for an article that might provoke displeasure in Berlin to find space in the columns of any newspaper in northern, eastern or central Europe.

‘In these circumstances a country such as Great Britain that both retains freedom of the Press at home and abstains from propaganda abroad is in as weak a position as a fighting force which is too proud to take cover from attack and refuses to return the fire of the enemy.

‘These conditions have arisen gradually. If we had been told ten years ago that a free Press was to disappear in Europe and that tens of millions a year were to be spent on propaganda we should have said that strong measures must be taken to deal with such an extraordinary situation. But the gradual growth of evil renders it too easily acceptable.

‘We know that if war came we should be driven to set up a Ministry of Propaganda, as we did in the last war, but so long as peace is maintained very little is being done to prepare for it.

‘There exists the British Council which has only been

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active for a few years and which is doing invaluable work. Under the energetic control of Lord Lloyd it has made vast strides in a short time, but its activities are cultural not political, and the amount of money that it spends is infinitesimal in comparison with the sums spent by other countries.

'In this matter of propaganda the free countries of the world are now being subjected to an offensive on the largest scale. The German Ministry of Propaganda controls over 300 German newspapers published in foreign countries, and the National Socialist Party issues its instructions to all Nazi organizations outside Germany, the number of which is estimated at 30,000.

'Special institutions exist in Germany for the training of those who are to carry on propaganda in foreign countries. They are under the direction of Dr. Rosenberg, the great upholder of German paganism, who denounced St. Matthew as a "Jewish fanatic" and St. Augustine as a "mongrel half breed".

'Propaganda is an attempt to influence opinion. Upon the opinion of the growing generation in Europe, America and the British Dominions depends the future of the world. Steps should be taken to ensure that that opinion is not contaminated at the source.

'Where free speech still exists every effort should be made to answer and to confute false doctrine. Where free speech is shut out no opportunity should be missed of making a breach in the barrier in order that truth may penetrate and ultimately prevail.'

* * * *

'Defeat in battle, or even delay in victory is usually attended by criticism of the fighting services, and some-

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times followed by an inquiry. Such an inquiry took place after the South African War, after the invasion of the Dardanelles and after the campaign of Mesopotamia. In recent years Great Britain has sustained a series of diplomatic defeats, which, without a blow being struck, have transformed the map of Europe and dislocated the balance of power.

‘The Diplomatic Service has a great tradition. It is a small service and the general public has little knowledge of it. Romantic but most misleading accounts of diplomatic life are given occasionally by the writers of sensational fiction. Most diplomatists, alas, complete their careers without once coming into contact with a beautiful spy or being the bearer of a secret treaty. They are very hard worked; neither wealth nor fame rewards them. Their successes are seldom heard of because they are usually negative.

‘The war that does not break out, the incident that never takes place, the relations that do not become strained — these are the triumphs of diplomacy. Sleepless nights, tireless patience, and unfailing tact are devoted to such achievements, and all that the general public ever learn of it is when they notice in the Honours List that while four or five gentlemen have been created peers for making money, one, of whom they have never heard, has been made a knight for spending his life abroad in the service of his country.

‘If, therefore, I venture to suggest that there is room for reform in the Diplomatic Service, it is not because I under-rate the great qualities of our diplomatists.

‘The main problem of administration is to put the right men in the right places. It sounds simple but

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nothing is more difficult. The usual method of selecting public servants in the earliest stages is by competitive examination. In the past it was done by private influence and — strange to relate the results were not any less satisfactory. But competitive examination as a system has come to stay, and although there is no reason why a man who is good at answering examination papers should be good at anything else, it would be very difficult to devise a more satisfactory method of dealing with large numbers of applicants for a limited number of posts.

‘As the junior members of any service begin to rise in the hierarchy more and more depends upon their efficiency. This fact is recognized in the fighting services. At every stage in an officer’s career his record and capacity are carefully scrutinized before he receives promotion. He is periodically reported upon by his seniors. Such reports deal not only with the officer’s professional ability, his technical knowledge and his industry, but also with his character, his social gifts, his popularity with his men and his brother officers, and his capacity for leadership.

‘As officers approach middle age a critical moment is reached when it has to be decided whether they are fit for the gravest responsibilities. For a man may be hard-working, intelligent, courageous and of the highest character and yet may not be the ideal Captain of a ship or Colonel of a battalion. And as the summit of the profession is approached the proportion of posts to candidates dwindles rapidly, so that not only the unfit but the fit as well have to be discarded in favour of the fitter.

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‘These are tragic moments in the careers of many who find that there is no longer room for them in the profession that they love, while they are still in the full vigour of their manhood. Yet it is never questioned that some such system must exist in order to ensure that the vitally important positions upon which the safety of our Empire depends shall be filled only by those who have proved beyond a shadow of a doubt their exceptional competence.

‘But in the Diplomatic Service there is no such system. There the youth who has successfully passed his entrance examination knows that unless he commits something in the nature of a crime he can sit safely in the service until he reaches the age limit. And it is the business of the service to find a seat for him.

‘Nor are his character and abilities ever the subject of an official report. Young Jones may have been a by-word at the Embassy for laziness and incompetence — a blight in the Chancery, a blot at the Ambassador’s dinner table, but those in authority at the Foreign Office, upon whom his future depends, will only hear of it through the channel of untrustworthy gossip.

‘“How about young Jones?” the Head of the Mission may be asked on his return, and he, being in a happy mood on his way to a holiday, will reply with a shrug, “Oh, he’s not a bad boy”, and will feel that he has been good natured, nor suspect that he has done an injury to the public service.

‘Gradually, no doubt, it will become known that Jones is a fool and not a pleasant one — but still there can be no question of getting rid of him. So when his name comes up for promotion, the weary private secretary in Downing

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Street, possibly in the throes of an international crisis, will shrug his shoulders and send him off to Ruritania — one of those distant countries of which we know little — in the hope that the Ruritaniens will discover qualities in him which have been concealed from his fellow countrymen.

‘But to represent His Majesty in a foreign country is no less grave a responsibility than to command one of His Majesty’s ships or regiments — and it is a bitter experience for the travelling British subject to discover when he arrives at the capital of even so small a country as Ruritania that H.M. Minister is the laughing stock of the town.

‘The difficulty could be easily got over if once the fact were frankly recognized that not everybody who passes an examination at 22 is fit to represent his country at 45. It would mean that those passed over for promotion would be entitled to a respectable pension as in the other services. The expense, owing to the size of the Diplomatic Service, would be trifling. Nor would it be any deterrent to candidates. On the contrary it would be an encouragement, for at 22 nobody believes that he himself will be found incompetent at 45, and the knowledge that others will be must stir up hopes of more rapid promotion.

‘Unfortunately, however, another and a disastrous method has been adopted in order that promotion may not be too long delayed. It has lately become the practice to insist upon retirement when the age limit of sixty is reached, or if an extension of two or three years is given, it is considered the limit of concession.

‘But diplomacy is the one and perhaps the only profession in which old age is no disadvantage. Vigour

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and vision, energy and push, qualities so indispensable to the sailor and the soldier, so valuable to the politician or the man of business, have very little place in the equipment of the perfect diplomatist, and are valueless in comparison with — to him the most valuable of all attributes — experience.

'Talleyrand's advice to the young diplomat was "Above all — avoid too much zeal", and Talleyrand himself entered on his most successful diplomatic mission in his seventy-ninth year.

'The position of an Ambassador who has held his appointment for many years is one of tremendous power and prestige. In a democratic country he will probably have seen many governments come and go. The changing politicians will have come to consider him as something more permanent than themselves, whose advice not only upon foreign but even on domestic affairs is worth having.

'A man holding such a position can render immense services both to his own country and to the cause of international understanding.

'Before the war, the representatives of Russia and France in London, Count Benckendorff and M. Paul Cambon, were leading figures in the political and social life of the country and were better known to the public than many Cabinet Ministers. Since the war we have, owing to this childish adherence to a foolish Civil Service regulation, cut short the careers of some of our representatives abroad, who were building up, or had built up for themselves outstanding positions in foreign capitals.

'Two of the more recent cases were those of Sir Ronald

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Graham, who held a unique position in Rome, which no Ambassador from any country has attained before or since, and Sir Horace Rumbold, who was certainly the most successful Ambassador in Berlin for many years. Both these distinguished diplomatists are still with us, and if they were members of the Cabinet they would not be the oldest members.

‘With a lofty disregard of logic we continue to employ in the far more exacting and exhausting profession of politics, men whom we would have discharged long ago if they had happened to be diplomatists. If the same rule applied in politics as in diplomacy neither Disraeli nor Mr. Chamberlain would ever have been Prime Minister.

‘I am not saying that we should reduce the age of politicians. Some old men have twice the vigour of their juniors. But let us apply to diplomacy the two lessons that we have learnt from the fighting services and from politics. Let us lose no time in getting rid of our failures, and let us retain our successes as long as we can. A fool of forty should never be allowed to represent his Majesty; a wise man of eighty may be the best Ambassador in the world.’

The Services usually resent criticism, and when such criticism comes from an ex-member of the Service it is often regarded as a kind of treachery. With regard to this article, however, I met with nothing but praise and agreement from diplomatists past and present. One former Ambassador wrote to me that he had always made it a practice to forward periodical reports on his staff to the Foreign Office. He had however never been asked to do so and so far as he was aware little attention was paid to such reports.

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There is general agreement amongst all who have had any experience of it that the Diplomatic Service is in urgent need of reform. But nothing is done about it because it is nobody's business to take the first step. The Secretary of State is the most overworked member of the Cabinet and has no leisure in which to consider the machinery of his department and so the present system is likely to continue until some major break-down arouses popular interest and indignation.¹

* * * *

'It is a remarkable fact that out of the four most recent newcomers to the Cabinet not one has been promoted owing to outstanding Parliamentary ability.

'Neither the Lord Chancellor, Lord Maugham, nor the Minister for Co-ordination of Defence, Lord Chatfield, has ever served in the House of Commons. The Lord Privy Seal, Sir John Anderson, had only been a Member for a few months at the time of his appointment, and the Minister of Agriculture, Sir R. Dorman-Smith, although a most popular Member and an excellent speaker, entered the House only at the last General Election and owes his promotion to his special knowledge of agriculture.

'There are many people who will hold the opinion that in these stern times it is far better to select Ministers on account of their technical knowledge rather than in accordance with their proficiency in the arts of debate. It is not proposed here to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of such a system, but merely to point out

¹ Since the above was written Great Britain has suffered another severe diplomatic defeat in the conclusion of the German-Soviet pact, which came as a complete surprise to the Government.

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that it is a departure from precedent and to inquire into the causes that have led to it.

'The appointment of four Cabinet Ministers, none of whom have been through the usual parliamentary mill, or served his apprenticeship as an Under Secretary, may be due to a series of fortuitous circumstances. It may, on the other hand, be symptomatic of a new phase in our Parliamentary history.

'Writing in these columns three weeks ago I observed that the clever young men in the Labour Party did not seem to be finding their way into the House of Commons. Is it possible that the same may be true of other parties and that the promotion of technicians in the place of politicians signifies a shortage of talent in Parliament?

'It is a long time since Anthony Trollope wrote that it was or should be the highest ambition of every Englishman to become a Member of the House of Commons. Membership of that assembly is no longer so coveted as it was. Many causes are contributing towards this result, but the most important of them is undoubtedly financial.

'It is as difficult for a poor man, if he be a Conservative, to get into the House of Commons, as it is for a camel to get through the eye of a needle. This is not to say that it is impossible, any more that it is impossible, we hope, for a rich man to get into the Kingdom of Heaven, but in both cases entrance is attended by difficulty.

'This is not, of course, the case in all constituencies. There are many exceptions. St. George's, Westminster, where expenses are met by subscribers to the association, the Member merely paying his share, is a shining example. There is even one constituency where the

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Member is not allowed to contribute anything and is presented with a house rent free by his supporters.

'The fact that this can be done in a district that is not particularly wealthy proves that it could be done also in a hundred safe Conservative seats given the necessary enthusiasm and efficient organization.

'There is only one remedy for this evil, namely, exposure. It would be useless for Central Office to step in and attempt to enforce rules and regulations. The Conservative Party, unlike the Labour Party, is intensely democratic, and the local authorities resent interference from headquarters. But this spirit of local independence carries with it a spirit of local patriotism, and the Conservatives of Bassetshire would not like to be branded as the Shylocks who extracted the largest number of pounds of flesh or of gold from their Member of Parliament.

'It is not, however, only the expense that deters so many from entering on a political career. The life of a politician is not as attractive as it used to be, nor are the rewards that await the fortunate few so substantial.

'To a people who still love living in the country and to a class the majority of whom still regard some rural retreat as their home, it is no small sacrifice to spend nine months of the year in London, including the greater part of the sporting season. There was a time when an autumn session was the exception. It has now become the rule, which is never likely to be broken.

'Business has increased, especially such business as is conducted on paper. The spread of education and the invention of the typewriter have multiplied the ordinary Member of Parliament's correspondence a hundredfold.

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'When the House is sitting a conscientious member has little time that he can call his own and on four days of the week he is a prisoner in the Palace of Westminster from three o'clock until close on midnight, and sometimes until the early hours of the morning.

'Spurning delights and living laborious days, to what reward does he look forward as the result of his labours?

'In no case can he acquire riches. Yet in these days of high taxation, before and after death, there are very few married men with families who can afford not to earn money if they are to make adequate provision for the future.

'Even those who are fortunate enough to find their way into the Cabinet do not become rich by doing so. A hundred years ago, and more, when £5000 was considered a suitable annual salary for a Cabinet Minister it represented something very different from what it does to-day. Its purchasing power has sunk while the taxes levied on it have increased enormously.

'In point of fact when a member of the House of Commons enters the Cabinet to-day, he receives £4400 increased remuneration as he ceases to draw £600 as a Member of Parliament. Taxation reduces that £4400 by another £1000, so that all he actually receives is something in the neighbourhood of £3500, although he is condemned to pay super-tax as though he had received the full £5000.

'For this sum he has to work like a galley slave. There is not a moment he can call his own. The ignorant may imagine that he can rest during the week-end, but throughout the week papers have been accumulating, which it is his duty to study, but at which he has not

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had time to glance. These more than fill such moments of leisure as the week-end may bring.

‘In addition to the weight of work there is the ever-present anxiety that must accompany the responsibility of high office, which together with the knowledge that a vigilant Opposition and an equally vigilant and much more competent Press are always waiting to pounce with avidity upon the first slip in word or deed, renders the life of a Cabinet Minister anything but a bed of roses.

‘When therefore we compare the life led by the rank and file in politics and the life led by their leaders with the lives of those in other walks of life, we are bound to admit that the political career no longer offers any outstanding attractions.

‘But the best brains in the country are required to cope with the political problems of the present age. And even the best brains may fail if they have received no training in politics before being asked to undertake political responsibilities, for in politics as in every other branch of mental activity, there is no proficiency without training.’

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As the first two months of the year produced no alarming event, those who had had faith in the policy of Munich but who had been slightly shaken by the Jewish persecutions in Germany, and by the refusal of Herr Hitler to make any friendly gesture or use any conciliatory language, began to recover confidence. I could not share the facile optimism of those who interpreted the absence of any sign to the contrary as evidence of an improvement in the situation.

As the month of January drew to a close there was much speculation as to what the German Chancellor would say in a speech that he was due to deliver on the 30th. Perhaps it was partly on account of the absence of other news that so much attention came to be concentrated upon this particular utterance. Whatever the cause, the interest was intense; so great indeed that I had a friend who, wishing to keep in touch with the international situation, although ignorant of German, patiently listened to an account of a boxing match in that language, under the impression that he was hearing the *ipsissima verba* of the Dictator.

I sat up late on the night that the speech was delivered, in order to complete my commentary on it which appeared on the following morning under the title 'Reply to Hitler':

'Never in history has one man's voice been listened to

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with so great attention as that which we pay to-day to the voice of Herr Hitler. The anxiety with which the world awaits his words, the careful scrutiny that is applied to them prove the success that has crowned his efforts to restore Germany to the position of the most powerful nation on the continent of Europe.

‘His achievement is so great that it might be thought he would be glad to rest upon it. But there is a very old political proverb which says that you can do everything with bayonets except sit on them. What was true of bayonets applies equally to machine-guns.

‘Power that has been acquired by force brings neither calm nor satisfaction to the conqueror. The most striking proof of these old principles was the speech that Herr Hitler delivered last night to the German Reichstag.

‘He has had a year of uninterrupted success.

‘He has combined for the first time within the German Reich the whole population of Austria, he has destroyed the independence of Czechoslovakia, he has broken the alliance between France and Poland, he has brought Hungary within his orbit, he has made the free city of Danzig a city of Nazis, he has almost succeeded in destroying the Republican Government of Spain, and he has concluded a treaty with the victorious party, which is plainly the first step towards establishing German supremacy in that country.

‘He would, indeed, be justified in singing a song of triumph, but it was no such song that he sang last night. The note that he struck was, on the contrary, something between a snarl and a whine.

‘The message that he seemed to wish to convey to the

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attendant world was that Germany was still being very badly treated, that people were still being very rude about good, kind, patient, peaceful Germany, but that those rude people had better be careful because if poor Germany were persecuted any longer she might hit back.

‘That a man at the end of such a year of triumph should be in such a state of mind is a problem for the pathologist.

‘For two and a half hours Herr Hitler spoke to the so-called representatives of the German people, not one of whom would dare to criticize a single word that fell from the Leader’s lips.

‘Perfunctory applause marked the conclusion of each paragraph, but what the people of Germany think of it all we cannot tell. Do they still believe that they are being ill treated or do they rather agree with Dr. Goebbels that the whole world stands in fear of them? Both cannot be true.

‘While there was much airing of old grievances in the speech there was no new proposal for meeting them — no suggestion that the wrongs of Germany, the difficulties and disabilities, economic and colonial, from which she is suffering might be settled in the way that the British Government would like to see them settled, the only way it is to be hoped in which any British Government would ever consent to settle them, namely, by international conference.

‘If Germany has further claims to make on the long-suffering patience of her victors let her come to the conference table and state them plainly. Unfortunately she has found that another method has served her better,

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in the Rhineland, in Austria and in Czechoslovakia. She may still intend to repeat it.

'The references to Italy and Japan would seem to indicate that the fortunes of Germany are irrevocably linked to those of her two allies and the most alarming statement was when he assured his audience that if Italy found herself at war, whatever the cause of that war might be, Germany would be upon her side.

'So comprehensive and unlimited a guarantee has seldom been given by one country to another. Coming as it does so soon after Italy's unreasonable and indefensible demands on France, it is an incentive to aggression, an incitement to folly.

'The colonial claim was repeated in even stronger language, but as the demand grows more insistent it does not grow less vague. No claim can be discussed until it is formulated. No claim can be met unless some compensatory advantage is at the same time conceded.

'There was the old grumble about reparations, the old suggestion that the democracies are controlled by the Jews, and the repeated attempt to give undue importance to humble individuals such as the writer of this article.

'There are two new things in the speech. One is the particularly vile insult to the United States of America — the allegation that America came into the last war for purely financial reasons — an insult which will be deeply resented and long remembered from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Pacific Ocean.

'There is also an indication of the resentment roused by British broadcasts to Germany. This is the answer to that message of goodwill sent to the German people

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less than a week ago by a number of eminent non-political English gentlemen.

'The reply proves, what some of us have long suspected, that what Hitler fears most in all the world is the truth penetrating to the German people.

'Now that the speech is over the general feeling throughout the world is that it might have been worse. The state of suspense in which men waited yesterday for the words that were to fall from Herr Hitler's lips was an humiliation for the free peoples of the world.

'It was symptomatic of a state of affairs that cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely. It is bad that one whole nation should tremble before the frown of an individual. It is unbearable that the activities of men all over the world should be paralysed — like the figures in the castle of the Sleeping Beauty — at the mere suggestion that Herr Hitler is about to speak.

'This morning that suspended animation is restored. The wheels go round again and, with pathetic relief, men draw one another's attention to those passages in the long speech which provide grounds for hope.

'It is pointed out with delight that Herr Hitler thinks there will be a long period of peace and that he has no claims, other than colonial, against Great Britain. So the fears of those who thought that he was going to ask for the Isle of Wight are set at rest.

'But how much longer is this state of affairs to continue? How much longer are the periods of European history to be determined by the intervals between Herr Hitler's speeches? How much longer are the attendant nations to scramble for the crumbs of comfort that fall from his table?

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'It is time that Herr Hitler was answered. Somebody speaking with the authority of His Majesty's Government and with the explicit approval of the British Empire should give him a reply. He should be reminded of how much he has already obtained, he should be warned that there are bounds to concession and limits to patience.

'He should be urged to bring his grievances to the conference table, or put them through the usual diplomatic channels, rather than to proclaim them on the public platform. He can be assured that they will be heard with the desire to meet them, but he must be asked to be ready to give as well as to take.

'It should be pointed out to him that four months ago he solemnly swore that he had no further territorial claims in Europe, and he should therefore be asked why he now considers that a further increase in German armaments is required. If he believes that he has anything to fear, let him state his grounds for that belief.

'There is, perhaps, only one man left to whom he still will listen, one man whom he cannot refuse to hear, and that man, who should speak to him plainly before it is too late, is the Prime Minister of Great Britain.'

The tone of this article was not that adopted by the Press in general. Anxiety which had grown in intensity as the day of the great speech approached underwent an immediate relief and the reaction produced a desire to exaggerate the more hopeful and minimize the more disquieting features. Whatever other accusation can be brought against the conduct of the British people during the Nazi regime, it can never be said that every effort has not been made to treat it with sympathy and

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understanding. Always it has been given the benefit of the doubt. The earlier breaches of treaty were condoned, the later were explained away whenever possible and on every word that fell from the Führer's lips, efforts were made to place the most favourable construction.

On February 7th there took place in the House of Commons a debate on the Czechoslovakia (Financial Assistance) Bill. It was part of the melancholy aftermath of Munich and brought home to some members very painfully, the shame and misery that that agreement had imposed upon a free and independent republic. In October the Prime Minister had expressed his belief that 'under the new system of guarantees the new Czechoslovakia will find a greater security than she has ever enjoyed in the past', and Sir Samuel Hoare had assured the House that Czechoslovakia would be 'as safe as Switzerland'.

Sharing this blissful confidence the House of Commons had been ready to vote any sums of money which, in the shape of a loan, might assist the recovery of the new republic whose independence and security were rendered so safe by the guarantees that had been given. Thirty million pounds was the figure contemplated and ten million was advanced forthwith on the assumption that parliamentary approval would be forthcoming.

Four months, however, had wrought a change in the situation. Nobody believed in the boasted independence of Czechoslovakia any more. But part of the money had been spent and Parliament was bound to pay the bill. Twelve million was all that was demanded. No reference was made to the original figure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated the case with his unfailing

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skill and a short debate followed which attracted little attention at the time, but it was of importance as indicating for the first time in Parliament how far in four months we had travelled from the blind optimism of October towards the grim reality that was to face us in March. I made a brief contribution to this debate myself although I had not intended to do so. I said:

‘This is not a proud day for the House of Commons and the sooner it is over the better. We have the feeling that this is not a very happy business but that in the circumstances we cannot do other than what we are proposing to do. Some months ago, in a moment of great relief, there was an uneasy feeling in the minds of many that one country had suffered unduly, and there was a generous impulse in the hearts of all that if that slight twinge of conscience which was present even then could be salved by a money payment, there should be no restraint upon the amount of money that we were prepared to spend. I do not believe the Chancellor of the Exchequer or His Majesty’s Government are more to blame than any other Member of the House of Commons, for had they been able to bring forward a Motion on October 3rd in favour of spending ten, twenty or fifty millions to assist the state of Czechoslovakia, it would undoubtedly have been passed unanimously. Events since then have altered the minds of many.

‘I had not intended to speak, and I do not think that unless the Hon. and gallant Member for North-west Hull [Sir A. Lambert Ward] had intervened, I should have spoken. I noticed that even in his speech there was an awakening to a new vision of the situation. He

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referred to what was once known as the great triumph of Munich as an unfortunate incident, and I am really speaking because I hope that the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who, I understand, is to reply, will deal with what I consider a most unfortunate utterance that fell from the Hon. and gallant Member for North-west Hull. He admitted that Czechoslovakia had been let down and he attempted to shift all the blame upon the great friendly country, to which he referred inaccurately as our ally, France. I think he added Russia under the apparent impression, equally erroneous, that Russia is also an ally of ours. There is no truth whatever, I maintain, for the allegation that the Czechoslovak Government were encouraged during the summer and autumn of last year to maintain an intransigent attitude by the French Government. It is most regrettable that a supporter of His Majesty's Government should make that accusation, and I sincerely hope the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs will answer that charge. If wrong was done at Munich it was done by France and England together, and if blame is to be borne we should not seek to shirk our share of it.

'The Hon. Member for East Aberdeen [Mr. Boothby] asked the Under Secretary to give a clear statement as to how the question of our guarantee of the frontiers of Czechoslovakia now stands. Far be it from me to seek to answer the Right Hon. gentleman's questions for him. I have no doubt that he has a very adequate and satisfactory reply. The plain truth of the matter is that we cannot possibly guarantee the frontiers of Czechoslovakia to-day. We have reduced the money we promised to give them and we must now let the guarantee

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go to the winds. The Chancellor of the Exchequer himself referred to the road which is to be built through Czechoslovakia from north to south and east to west as "the German road". How can you guarantee the frontiers of a country that has a foreign road running across it? Czechoslovakia has no frontiers to-day. It has been stated in print and it has not been contradicted that during the negotiations of the international commission appointed to draw up the frontiers of Czechoslovakia the only person who ever spoke against the German claims or sought to modify them was the representative of the Italian Government. The Government of Czechoslovakia were prepared to resist if any one would support them, but as nobody would support them they quite rightly, in face of inevitable facts, decided to bend their neck beneath the yoke, and to bend it properly. No guarantee could be given by any sane government of the frontiers of Czechoslovakia to-day, because those frontiers are where Germany cares to say they run.

"Those are facts of which we ought to be aware, they are facts which cannot now be changed, but we ought at least, even at this late hour, to be clear in our own minds as to what it is that we are doing. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has made an admirable case showing how this money is all to be spent upon projects which would have the approval of every Member of this House. Is that really of great importance? The Czechoslovak Government are certainly going to spend £10,000,000 or £12,000,000 or £20,000,000 on some of many activities which would have the approval of this House, but money spent on those activities simply releases other money to be spent upon other activities. It really does

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not matter whether it could be proved that all this money was going to be spent on strengthening the German frontier or whether it could be shown that it was all going to be spent on schools or benefit for the unemployed. As the Right Hon. and gallant gentleman¹ has just said, it is money which is going to be spent at the dictation of the German Government. It is not for us to blame the Government of Czechoslovakia. You cannot blame a prisoner for showing obedience, and even subservience, to the will of the gaoler, especially if you have been partly responsible for getting him into the gaol.

My Hon. friend the Member for East Aberdeen struck a more optimistic note, I think, than anybody else in the House. He would like to increase the sum we are paying to Czechoslovakia, and he notes with great satisfaction the good trade returns of Czechoslovakia during the last few months. Those good trade returns are largely owing to the fact that Czechoslovakia is now working within the German orbit, and it may be, and, indeed, we should all hope it will be, that the people of Czechoslovakia, industrious as they are, will achieve great prosperity, as great a prosperity as they enjoyed before the War. Great commercial prosperity they may win, but they have lost something which is more precious to them, and that is their liberty.

I have not the acquaintance which the Right Hon. and gallant Member has with the people of Czechoslovakia, and have never visited that country, but every day through the post, applications come to me, which are as pitiful as any of those which he recounted, from unfortunate people who are only longing to get out of

¹ The Right Hon. Josiah Wedgwood.

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their own country. I could have wished, perhaps, that this money had been given where it would have been far better spent—to Lord Baldwin's Fund for Refugees, rather than to the Czechoslovak Government, because although we may not wish to use harsh words, and although we may object to the term "a vassal State", we cannot get away from the fact that in the shape of military roads Germany is branding the swastika upon the face of Czechoslovakia, and that badge of shame will remain there until the frontiers of Europe are redrawn.'

Commenting on this debate the *Sunday Times* found cause for satisfaction in the fact that 'the unworthy gibe of conscience money was not heard. Mr. Duff Cooper however went one worse when he spoke of "a brand of shame that would remain there until the frontiers of Europe were redrawn" — an implied threat that was dangerously improper coming from an ex-Minister'.

The frontiers of Europe were about to be redrawn considerably sooner than the *Sunday Times* expected and in a sense which even so consistent a supporter of the policy of appeasement can hardly have approved.

But as the month of February produced no further cause of alarm every effort was made in Great Britain to calm down such slight ripples as the speech of January had left on the surface. It seemed at one time as though Ministers were consciously competing with one another as to who should give the most reassuring statements to the public. Unfortunately, this outburst of optimism coincided with the launching of the National Service scheme to which it nearly proved fatal. It is no good to implore a man for assistance and at the same time assure him that you have no need of it. It was because I doubted

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the validity of the prevalent hopefulness and because I saw the harm that it was doing to recruiting that I wrote the following article which appeared on the last day of February:

* * * *

‘An impression exists in this country at the present time that there has recently been a great improvement in the international situation. Men are naturally anxious to find what they are looking for. How many a sail has the shipwrecked mariner fancied upon the horizon, how many an oasis beheld by the wanderer in the desert has proved a mirage in the end!

‘The bearer of good news is ever welcome. His credentials are not examined too closely, the sources of his information are lightly assumed to be sound. But he who brings bad tidings must expect a poor reception.

‘“Thou shalt be whipp’d with wire and stew’d in brine”, Cleopatra exclaimed to the messenger who told her that Antony was married; and Napoleon never promoted an officer who had brought him bad news.

‘I remember that when on October 16th, 1933, I ventured, addressing the Junior Imperial League in my constituency, to say that Germany, whence I had recently returned, was preparing for war on a scale and with an enthusiasm unparalleled in history, I was violently attacked on the following morning for being an inaccurate alarmist and guilty of gross indiscretion.

‘It was suggested that I ought to be — and the next day it was announced by some political correspondent that I was going to be — dismissed from the post that I then occupied in the Government.

‘But unpopularity should not be allowed to stand in

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the way of duty, and it is the duty of those who speak or write in public to convey to their audience the truth as they see it. Let us therefore examine coolly the present international position without wishing to paint it any darker or rosier than it is.

'Outside the Spanish arena very little has happened in Europe during the month of February. This in itself is good.

'If the patient gets no worse we may assume that the normal course of nature is producing improvement. Those prophets who are so rash as to indulge in dates, believing, like Old Moore, that they are bound to get it right some day, have been disproved in so far as they selected any day of February for the next alarum.

'The most important event has been the pronouncement of the Prime Minister when he reaffirmed in vigorous language the solidarity of this country with France. This statement was amplified and reinforced by Lord Halifax in the House of Lords last week.

'I remember that when I myself said something to the same purpose in Paris in the summer of 1936, the Socialist Party secured the adjournment of the House for the purpose of denouncing me for having suggested that we were in any way bound to France and for having used language that might possibly give offence to Germany.

'The Prime Minister's statement has done nothing but good. Its influence has been clarifying and tonic.

'Events in Spain, in so far as they bring nearer the termination of hostilities, have also contributed towards improvement because any peace in the peninsula is better than the continuation of war. The action taken by the Government in assisting the negotiations that

led to the surrender of Minorca was well timed and well calculated to secure the goodwill of both of the contending factions.

‘Finally we have to set upon the credit side the vast new loan for defence purposes and the debate that accompanied its introduction in the House of Commons.

‘Although the Opposition naturally availed themselves of the opportunity to criticize the Government, there came no suggestion from their ranks, as the Prime Minister rightly pointed out, that such expenditure was unnecessary or that they themselves would shrink from incurring similar liabilities.

‘The world was thus presented with the spectacle of a people united in so far as they recognize the gravity of the danger that faces them, and in so far as they are willing to make every sacrifice in order to meet it.

‘Here the catalogue of improvements ends; and, while it is distinctly encouraging, it is hardly sufficient to warrant confident optimism with regard to the future or to justify the statement made by a Cabinet Minister last week that the barometer was now set to fair.

‘It is hardly necessary to recall to mind the real reasons for the anxiety which has been growing in the world during the last six years, and which is now imposing upon all nations an almost unbearable burden of taxation and debt. It is due solely to the claims, the activities and the menaces of certain Powers.

‘Those claims have not been diminished by a single iota, those activities continue day and night, and if for a short period the soft pedal has been applied to the menaces, we should remember that menaces can be as

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carefully timed as attacks, and that we have recently been informed by Herr Hitler that the attack which he made on Austria last March was decided upon in January, and that the invasion of Czechoslovakia which took place in October was planned in May.

'The comparative quiet that has fallen upon Europe may be the beginning of the end of the storm, but it may on the other hand be only a lull, and it would certainly be safer to assume that it is the latter. A wise seaman takes full advantage of a lull to prepare against a continuance of the storm.

'Such preparations are now being made, and not the least important of these is the great experiment of attempting to recruit on a voluntary basis the whole man power needed for the defence of the country. Reports indicate that progress in this respect is not at present satisfactory. The reason is not far to seek.

'The best, the keenest and the most patriotic section of our people have already volunteered. The appeal is now to those who for many reasons are slightly deafer to the call of duty. And because they do not respond so readily, increased pressure must obviously be laid upon the urgent need of their services. But instead of that pressure being increased, it is being diminished.

'Those perfectly patriotic but rather lazy, rather leisure-loving, hesitant and reluctant people are being told daily on the very best authority that now all is well with our rearmament programme, that we are now in a position to shock the three corners of the world if they should come in arms against us, and, further, that there is no prospect of their so coming, because the glass is set to fair.

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'Can we wonder that with such good news ringing in their ears they feel that they may go with an easy conscience to the cinema this evening instead of devoting their time to some tedious task in preparation for a war that everybody, except a few mischievous warmongers, knows will never take place?

'Three years ago I was sharply criticized for having said that I wanted to frighten people. I still think it was a pity that I failed to do so then. I would not, however, frighten them now unduly. They have suffered sufficiently in the last six months, and their nerves need tender handling.

'But I would not allow them to avail themselves of the lull in order to forget the danger.

'The danger still exists, and the best hope of averting it lies in the manifestation of our people's determination to resist it. Every man and woman who enlists for national service contributes something towards the impression that that manifestation will ultimately produce upon the mind of any potential aggressor.'

The chief event of this short period was the gradual conclusion of the Spanish Civil War. My sympathies during this contest had, like those of many Englishmen, been wavering and divided. The worst excesses of the Government side at the outset had naturally alienated much moderate opinion. The policy of non-intervention had everything to recommend it. It is in the first place the normal and natural policy for strangers to adopt in a domestic quarrel. In the second place, whereas the majority of Englishmen inclined to neutrality, important and well organized minorities, a political one on the left, a religious one on the right, passionately

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supported the respective causes of the Spanish Government and of General Franco. In the third place the policy of non-intervention was suggested and urged upon us by Monsieur Blum who was Prime Minister of France, at the head of the Popular Front Government at the time of the outbreak of the war. In the fourth place, the governments that seemed most likely to intervene upon one side or the other, namely the Soviet Government and the Governments of Germany and Italy, professed themselves willing to enter into the scheme of non-intervention and to co-operate with the democracies in enforcing it. It was difficult at the time to foresee the extent of the duplicity which would be practised and subsequently boasted of, by the Governments of two great European countries which were once governed by men of honour. Finally, it seemed that to lend support to either side was to incur the risk of precipitating a war in Europe.

As the war dragged on and as the assistance rendered to General Franco by Germany and Italy became more effective and less disguised, there seemed no other policy for Great Britain to pursue than to await the end in the hope that when the fighting was over, the independence of the Spanish character would assert itself, and that it would never permit Spain to become the vassal of foreigners merely because they had assisted Spaniards to defeat Spaniards.

I wrote an article on the subject which appeared under the title of 'Franco's Choice' on February 14th. .

'Prince Swarzenberg was once asked what Austria would do when Russia demanded something in return for the invaluable assistance she had rendered in the subjugation of Hungary. Without a moment's hesitation

the Prince replied: "We shall astonish Europe by our ingratitude."

'The virtue of gratitude, it is true, plays but a small part in international affairs, and no statesman would be wise to rely on it as a basis of policy. General Franco, if, as now seems probable, he completes his victory in the Spanish Civil War, will have to make many important decisions in the near future, and much must depend upon the extent to which he allows those decisions to be influenced by the sentiment of gratitude.

'It is certain that he owes a great deal to the assistance that he has received from Germany and Italy. But it is equally certain that that assistance was not rendered for the sake of the General's fine eyes, out of sympathy with the aspirations of the Spanish people, or from pure kindness of heart on the part of the dictators.

'Each in giving help had his ulterior motive. Exactly what those motives were is still obscure, but the extent to which they are accomplished will soon be apparent.

'The Spanish are by nature a proud and independent people. They do not like foreigners, and the knowledge of standing in debt seldom increases our love for our creditors. It is probable that when they have ceased to hate and to kill one another, both sides will turn eyes of deep suspicion on those intruders who have helped them in a task upon which they can look back with little save remorse.

'It may well be that they will then regard their erstwhile allies not as saviours in adversity, but as accomplices in crime.

'Such speculations give us grounds to hope that the people of Spain will then regard with least aversion the

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one nation that has most sincerely attempted to preserve a strict neutrality — namely, Great Britain, and that they will see in her the country that is in the best position to give assistance in the great task of reconstruction that awaits them.

‘If General Franco decides, as now seems not unlikely, to restore the Spanish monarchy, there will be ruling over Spain a prince in whose veins runs English blood and who has served with distinction in the Royal Navy.

‘These facts give ground for hope, but before we embrace that hope too lightly, we must remember that there is another side to the picture. While it is unlikely, once the victory is assured, that either the Italian or the German Government will wish to retain their troops in Spain, they both may have other objectives of which it will not be easy to deprive them.

‘The island of Majorca is now practically in Italian occupation. Signor Mussolini has assured us that he has no territorial demands on Spain, but since that assurance was given Italy has made certain very substantial territorial demands on France, and it has already been suggested that she might make her evacuation of Majorca conditional upon those demands being granted.

‘Majorca lies upon the line of France’s communications with her African possessions, and the occupation of it by an unfriendly Power is a threat to her security.

‘So far as Germany is concerned, there exist equally grave reasons for anxiety. At the end of last month a “cultural agreement” was signed by Germany and General Franco. According to the terms of this agreement, a German House is to be set up in Spain for the spreading of German propaganda, and steps are to be

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taken for granting tariff preferences to Germany. There are to be German schools in Spain conducted upon German lines for the encouragement of German ideas and the German language.

'More important still is a provision by which the Spanish Government will undertake to prevent the publication of any books in Spain which criticize the German system of government or the leading personalities in German politics.

'This clause, if accurately reported, is formidable, for if it were conscientiously carried out it would entail the subjugation of Spanish liberty to the will of Herr Hitler.

'Already in the smaller countries of Northern and Central Europe editors are being urged by their Governments to refrain from the publication of news and articles that might cause displeasure at Berchtesgaden. The inclusion of such a condition in a treaty is a further proof both of the extent of Germany's ambitions and of the threat to human liberty which the extension of her power would bring.

'It raises also another point of great importance. The Spanish war has been to a large extent a war of religion, and the most serious charges which have been brought against the Republican side have been in connection with outrages on Roman Catholic churches, monasteries and convents.

'Yet we are now presented with a strange spectacle. The hero of the Faith in the hour of victory concludes a treaty with one whom the venerable and saintly Head of his Church, so recently deceased, condemned in the strongest language, and would not permit to cross the threshold of the Vatican.

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'If in future nothing is to be published in Spain which reflects unfavourably on the regime in Germany, the first publications to come under the ban will be the encyclicals of the late Pope. His Holiness denounced *ex cathedra* the strange racial theories upon which so much of Nazi pseudo-philosophy is based, and laid down definitely that such doctrine is contrary to the Christian faith.

'Farinacci, the secretary of the Fascist party, speaking recently in Berlin under the auspices of Herr Streicher, frankly admitted that "to-day the Churches everywhere stand with the democracies", and yet we are assured that it was the cause of the Church which the two dictators have assisted to triumph.

'This is certainly a strange dilemma, and the banning of the Pope's encyclicals would form an ironical comment on the conclusion of General Franco's crusade.

'However, we must hope for the best. Wiser counsels will possibly prevail. Upon General Franco much must depend. It is difficult in war time to form a just estimate either of the aims or the character of the protagonists. Propaganda presents us with the portrait either of a saint or a devil, and if we are wise, we reject both.

'The English people have watched with horror the long martyrdom of Spain. Their sources of information have been uncertain, and their sympathies have been divided. Of one fact they can be certain — that there has been great heroism and great suffering upon both sides.

'If the end come soon, let us neither probe into the causes nor recall the horrors, but let us honour the heroism and pity the suffering, welcome the peace and make friends with the people.'

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In the forgoing article I referred to the death of Pope Pius XI, in the following one I welcomed the election of his successor:

* * * *

‘Never since the Reformation has the election of a Pope been awaited with so much attention and anxiety by the whole world. When the vast crowd who had been standing in St. Peter’s Square since dawn heard the name of Eugenio Pacelli a deep roar of thankfulness went up to heaven and found an echo in the hearts of millions.

‘Popes come and go, and those outside the Catholic faith pay small attention. Ten years ago it is doubtful whether one Protestant or unbeliever out of a thousand could have told you the name of the Pope; but last week there were great hosts who not only knew his name but felt a close personal link with Pius XI, and suffered an intimate loss the day he died.

‘The memory of that aged, saintly man, with the hand of death upon him, contemplating this world and the next with the same calm courage, rising repeatedly from what was thought to be his deathbed to continue his daily task, and never sparing himself a single duty, working all through the night when he had few hours to live upon the preparation of a speech that was never to be delivered — that memory will long remain not only in the hearts of the faithful, but also in the mind of the man in the street, in the minds of millions of men in hundreds of thousands of streets all over the world.

‘When the sea is calm the traveller pays little attention to the officers of the ship in which he travels. He hardly distinguishes one from the other, and it is seldom that he knows the name of the captain.

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‘But if suddenly there is danger of shipwreck then all eyes are instantly turned in agonized scrutiny on those in authority. Then the slightest sign of weakness or uncertainty on their part will at once spread fear and possibly panic among crew and passengers. For the officers it is the supreme test both of ability and of character. If they are found wanting then, they are condemned for ever.

‘Something not unlike shipwreck is threatening the civilized world to-day, and it is for this reason that those who occupy the positions of supreme authority are being tested as they have never been before. The eyes of millions follow all their movements, the ears of millions wait on all their words.

‘From that ordeal Pius XI emerged scatheless, because he never feared to speak the truth and he spoke it “as one having authority and not as the scribes”.

‘Men who a month ago could not have told you the name of a single Cardinal had learnt to believe that Cardinal Pacelli was of the same mind as his master and would pursue the same policy with the same fearlessness. Already his name had become a household word in many houses and people to whom the words “curia” and “conclave” had until recently conveyed little meaning, were gravely informing one another as though they had known it all their lives, that it was not in accordance with ecclesiastical custom for the Cardinal Secretary of State to succeed the Pope.

‘The greater therefore was the relief with which they learned that Pius XII was to succeed Pius XI.

‘Together with the fear of shipwreck there is developing among civilized people increased consciousness of the fact that they are all in the same boat.

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'It is for this reason that in spite of the carefully nurtured growth of a bitter, narrow nationalism in certain countries, there is in others a tendency to look outside as well as inside national frontiers for signs of leadership. Hence the wide welcome that the late Pope's leadership received, hence also the vast prestige enjoyed to-day in Europe by the President of the United States of America.

'The President does not stand upon such firm ground as the Pope. He is not a life-tenant of his office, and we are told that a third tenure would not be in accordance with the political tradition of the United States.

'Once again we are up against tradition. The Cardinals took the view that in time of tempest tradition should be thrown to the winds if it stands in the way of selecting the best man for the job. It is possible that the American people will share their opinion.

'The President has not been afraid, despite his dependence upon universal suffrage, to speak out boldly the truth that is in him. His fearlessness has evoked, as it always does, instantaneous response. Together with the picture of the dead Pope there is in the minds of many in these unquiet times the portrait of a laughing, courageous cripple who is determined to give a fair deal to the millions who depend on him.

'Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, speaking not long ago in America, said that New York might possibly become the next capital of the world. That position, he said, had once been occupied by Athens, then by Rome, and since by London. He omitted Paris, which I should have said was certainly the capital of the world in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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'It is an interesting prophecy, and may well be fulfilled. The capital of the world is not the city with the largest gold reserve, but the city to which the nations look as being the centre of civilization, and to which they instinctively compare themselves when they wish to measure their own merit.

'Recent reactions of American opinion to events in Europe do seem to suggest that there exists on the other side of the Atlantic to-day, a keener sense of justice than the Old World retains, a sharper appreciation of values, a deeper indignation at outrage and a firmer determination to denounce evil at all costs.

'Since the conquest of the air Great Britain has lost many of the advantages of being an island. It is high time that she abandoned some of the disadvantages of insularity as well. First and foremost should come an effort to appreciate what the United States stand for in the world to-day and what they have accomplished. There is no event in history more stupendous than the fact that in two centuries out of thirteen little colonies, mainly composed of refugees who had fled from different persecutions and held different faiths, scattered along the seaboard of an unknown continent there should have grown a vast nation of 120 millions enjoying the greatest material prosperity of any people in the world.

'During those two hundred years the American people have been so busily occupied struggling with nature, harnessing vast rivers, opening primeval forests, fertilizing deserts, that they have had little or no time to give to the arts and the humanities.

'But the first part of their task accomplished they are now turning their attention to the second, and it is at

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least possible that in matters of mind they will make as astonishing a progress in as short a time as they have already achieved in their conquest of the world of matter.

‘These are developments that we should watch with close interest and deep attention.

‘Meanwhile, so long as the Pope upholds all that is noblest in the ancient traditions of Europe and so long as the President gives voice to the hopes and aspirations of the New World, none of us need despair of civilization.’

CHAPTER VII

THE IDES OF MARCH

It is possible that the truthful biographer of Herr Hitler will describe the occupation of Prague on March 15th, 1939, as the greatest mistake of his career. The ease with which the coup was carried out proves that it could have been accomplished with equal facility at any later date, when it might have become necessary for military reasons. Coming when it did it conferred little immediate benefit upon Germany. For a hostile but impotent vassal state it substituted a sullen and rebellious province. It extended the boundaries of a hated tyranny and added to the numbers of unwilling subjects, thereby increasing the work of the secret police and the demand for accommodation in the concentration camps. If this had been the sum total of disadvantages incurred they might have received adequate compensation from the stolen wealth of the Czechs which helped to replenish the depleted coffers of the Third Reich. But by far the most important result of the rape of Czechoslovakia was the effect that it produced upon world opinion and upon the policies of the states principally concerned.

The agreement of Munich had not only increased enormously the strength of Herr Hitler's position on the continent of Europe, but it had also weakened that of his possible opponents, because it had divided them. Russia, bitterly resentful at not having been consulted with regard to a settlement as important to her as to other

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countries, was more than ever inclined to sink back into isolation and to play a continually decreasing part in the affairs of Europe.

To Poland, who had long been sitting on the fence, it seemed plain on which side she had better come down, and she was hastening with profuse congratulations to the assistance of the victor. The smaller Powers with greater reluctance, but also with greater trepidation, were taking the view that their only hope of salvation lay in making the best terms they could with an all powerful Germany. They had been set the example by France, who shortly before Christmas signed a pact of friendship with Herr von Ribbentrop, and they were coming to believe that in no circumstances was any assistance to be hoped for from Great Britain.

In this country the authors of the policy of appeasement still believed in its ultimate success, and so long as they believed in it their approach to the problem of creating an army lacked energy and conviction. In this very month of March the Government were authorizing commercial negotiations with Germany and on the day that the Germans marched, the President of the Board of Trade was about to set forth on a friendly visit to Berlin.

Indeed the optimism that had long prevailed at Downing Street reached a climax as the fateful day drew near and on the 9th of the month the British Press were officially authorized on the highest authority to present their readers with the rosiest picture possible of the international situation.

When therefore in those early March days Herr Hitler contemplated the panorama of Europe he beheld nothing that could cause him alarm. Some Powers he had

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tricked into trusting him, others he had forced into fearing him. There was ignorance and friendliness on the one hand, weakness and apprehension on the other, but nowhere was there preparation on a scale commensurate with his own and nowhere was there co-operation to resist him.

By one act he reversed the whole situation. The occupation of Prague altered the foreign policy of half the states of Europe and struck the scales from the eyes of millions. The mask fell from the face of Nazi Germany and the hideous features were disclosed. The frequently repeated protestations of satisfied ambitions were omitted as having served too often their purpose of deceiving the gullible. The solemn assertion of desiring to include only Germans within the Reich was exposed as the lying humbug it had always been. The nations knew at last that they were faced by a Power that sought world dominion and that could only be prevented from obtaining it by force.

Russia, so long the object of suspicion, became the centre of interest. Both sides set about the task of wooing the Power in whose face both sides had slammed the portals of Munich. If the Democracies had been more adroit or more eager they would doubtless have succeeded in winning the support which would have proved decisive to their cause. Poland in a flash realized the fate that awaited her if she, like Czechoslovakia, were to choose the easier road of compromise with her enemy — 'the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire'.

The smaller states, seeing the effect upon the greater, began to recover hope and to rally round the alternative, so soon as they were assured that there was an alternative

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to German domination. Roumania, Greece and Turkey flocked to the fold while France formed a more correct appreciation of the value to be attached to the Ribbentrop pact.

But it was in Great Britain that the result was most spectacular. It is not indeed too much to say that the effect on this country was epoch making, for it produced a complete reversal of foreign and domestic policy. The same Government that even the day after the occupation of Prague repudiated the possibility of entering into commitments with foreign countries proceeded almost immediately to commit Great Britain to take action in every quarter of Europe to an extent that she has never before been committed. The same Government that had refused even to draw up a compulsory register of the nation's man power proceeded compulsorily to conscript the whole youth of the country.

Delays inevitably occurred before the Government adopted in all its details the policy which some of its supporters had long been advocating and the additional spur of the assault on Albania was required to produce the conversion to conscription. The doubling of the Territorial Army was a useful step in this direction as it emphasized the injustice which was being inflicted on the more patriotic section of the community which was increased by every fresh sacrifice demanded of them.

During this short period of ultimate hesitation, I naturally renewed such pressure as I could exert and published on March 28th another article in favour of compulsion.

* * * *

‘Compulsion is a word hateful to Britons. We treasure

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our liberties very dearly, we guard them vigilantly and we bitterly resent any threat of encroachment on them.

'We are right to value freedom highly, but we should be wrong if we were to set it before security. For security is a condition of freedom and must therefore come first. Let the citizens be free within the walls of the city, but when those walls are in danger of attack from the enemy, if there is anyone who is unwilling to perform his share of defending them he is a bad citizen and must be compelled to do his duty.

'There is nothing undemocratic about this doctrine. It is of the very essence of Democracy. It is in the tradition of Athens; it is in the life blood of France. In the common interest force must be used to restrain the wrongdoer, be he murderer or thief. Equally in the common interest must force be used to ensure that the shirkers and the unpatriotic, who, in times of danger, are as much the enemies of the community as the criminals, shall not be allowed to evade their responsibilities.

'I do not, however, for one moment believe that the millions in Great Britain who have still no task assigned to them in the scheme of national service are either unpatriotic or have any desire to shirk their obligations. They are waiting to be told two things: first, whether there is really need of their services; secondly, how they can best serve.

'Unfortunately the success of the voluntary National Service scheme was seriously prejudiced from the start by a series of optimistic statements on the part of Ministers which resulted in convincing people of what they are ever most willing to believe, namely, that there

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was no ground for alarm nor any cause for interference with their normal habits.

'They were assured on the best authority that hatreds in Europe were being damped down, that the barometer was set fair, that a golden age of peace was at hand and they were encouraged to count their blessings rather than to sharpen their swords. Those who dared to strike a warning note were reminded that they had neither the responsibilities nor the sources of information open to Ministers and that their criticism, therefore, was based on irresponsibility and ignorance. They were contemptuously dismissed as "jitterbugs" or more severely denounced as warmongers.

'It is therefore of the first importance that this policy should be reversed and that there should come from the highest quarters authoritative statements calculated to leave no doubt in the minds of the people of the mortal danger that confronts the State.

'I believe that if, when that knowledge has sunk into the brains of our fellow countrymen, they are presented with a series of pamphlets on national service their reaction will be, "If the situation is as serious as it now appears, it is too late for the Government to ask us what we would care to do, it is time that they told us what we have got to do. We no longer wish to be invited or cajoled. We want to be commanded and led".

'We all remember the man who in the last war adopted the attitude, "If the Government really want me, let them come and get me. I shall go gladly but I do not feel called upon to volunteer". And it is for this reason that compulsory service is no greater interference with freedom than is compulsory taxation. Nobody likes

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paying taxes but everybody recognizes the unpleasant necessity. Although the collection of taxes must be compulsory, the basis of it is voluntary, for the citizens elect the men who vote the taxes.

‘But here one important difference arises. There is no party in the State that denies the necessity of taxation, but it appears that there exists a very powerful party that is likely to question the necessity of compulsory service. The resistance of the Socialist Party must at all costs be overcome and their consent obtained. The simplest method would be to persuade them to take their share of the responsibility. They should be asked to join the Government and generous terms should be offered them equally as to personnel and to policy.

‘If in the hour of national emergency they not only refused to collaborate with the Government but continued to thwart the policy which the Government believed the safety of the country demanded, they would stand condemned both in the eyes of the electorate and at the bar of history. The present is certainly not a suitable time for a General Election. The Socialist Party can force one. If they do so, their blood will be upon their own head.

‘Conscription is a word that expresses vaguely what the majority of people now believe the situation demands. Many of those who use it would hesitate to define it and there would be much difference of opinion before an agreed definition was reached. It is of course for the Government to say what man power is needed and where. Nobody wants to recruit numberless battalions of infantry until there are the means of training them and the equipment for arming them.

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'The first thing is to make statutory the right of the Government to call upon any able-bodied man to perform military service. The next thing is to compile a real national register, founded of course upon a compulsory basis, in order that the State may know exactly what are the resources of man power at its disposal.

'Knowing then both what are the demands and what is the supply the Government will have the task of making the latter meet the former, apportioning to commerce, to industry, to the services and to other requirements their proper share. Each man — and perhaps each woman too — must be told what task they will have to perform at a time of emergency. Then such steps as may be possible must be taken to give to each of them such training in peace as will render them efficient for service in war.

'In this way should be carried out the purpose of preparation — but simultaneously an even more important purpose would be served. We should prove to the world that we are in earnest — a fact of which the world is anxiously awaiting proof.

'Every other country in Europe has long since conscripted its man power. If Great Britain still refuses to do so can it be possible that Great Britain really means business? Is help to be expected from her, or would it be wiser to bow to what must otherwise be the inevitable domination of Germany?

'There was no help for Austria, no help for Czechoslovakia, no help for Lithuania. Would there be help for Switzerland? Would there be help for Denmark? Would there be help for Poland? These are the questions that are being asked in Europe. Compulsory service would give them the answer.'

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In the following week I once more returned to the charge and laid particular emphasis on the importance of obtaining the consent and, if possible, the co-operation of the Labour Party in introducing conscription.

* * * *

Jetzt gehört uns Deutschland,
Und bald, die ganze Welt.¹

'That is the song that the children and the young men and women are singing in the streets of Germany to-day, and it means: "Now Germany belongs to us, soon we shall own the whole world." The mind of a nation is expressed more plainly in its popular songs than in the speeches of its leaders, but now speeches and actions and songs all point to the same conclusion.

'Recent events and utterances have defined beyond all doubt the situation with which the world is confronted. The challenge has been made plain. There is no longer any excuse for misunderstanding it. By incorporating within the German Reich a large foreign population who have no wish to enter it and by neglecting for the first time to give any assurance that his territorial claims are satisfied, Herr Hitler has made it plain that his first aim is to dominate by force the continent of Europe.

'Almost simultaneously Signor Mussolini has committed himself to the opinion that peace is in itself a bad thing for civilization, and that if Italy is not contemplating immediate war it is only because she needs an interval in which to recuperate her strength. While such actions

¹ I have since verified the words of this song and find that the words 'heute' and 'morgen' should be substituted for 'Jetzt' and 'bald' — i.e. it should read 'to-day' and 'to-morrow' instead of 'now' and 'soon'.

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are permitted, while such utterances are made, while such men are at the head of great nations, there can be no peace in Europe. The best that can possibly be anticipated is a continuance of the tension in which we are now living and an increase of the mad competition in armaments which is gradually ruining us.

'The haughty challenge has been firmly met. The Prime Minister of Great Britain has stated that interference with the independence of Poland, which there was good reason to anticipate, will not be tolerated, and the Prime Minister of France has said that he will not yield an acre of French territory nor a single right that France possesses.

'Such language has already produced a salutary effect, but further steps will be necessary in order to bring fully into force the latest development of Anglo-French policy.

'First, the Democracies must prove that unity of purpose is not a monopoly of the Totalitarian States. Such unity indeed, imposed from above by force, may be impressive to the superficial beholder, but because it is maintained by force it is rotten at the core, and in the hour of trial its inner weakness will be displayed. In Great Britain, on the other hand, such divergence of opinion as does exist is proclaimed from the house-tops or across the floor of the House of Commons, which is the same thing, but behind and beneath such outward manifestations of controversy there exists a profound and abiding unity of purpose which has only to be called for in order to appear and to astonish the world, as it did in 1914.

'Proof of it was apparent twice last week in the House of Commons — first, when the Prime Minister announced

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the doubling of the Territorial Army; secondly, when he gave the guarantee to Poland. On each occasion Mr. Greenwood, who has been filling with dignity the role of Leader of the Opposition, asked helpful and constructive questions, and on the first occasion Sir Archibald Sinclair put the services of the Liberal Party at the disposal of the State.

'Already there seemed to be forming the nucleus of a Coalition Cabinet.

'The next step that should be taken is one that can best be taken after such a Coalition has been formed. The Socialist Party are stated still to be opposed to the adoption of any form of compulsion, but it cannot be believed that they would remain opposed to it if they could be persuaded that it was necessary for the safety of the State.

'The decision to double the Territorial Army has been of great value as a proof of the gravity of the situation and of the Government's determination to adopt drastic measures; but as a method of increasing our war potentiality it is open to serious criticism. In any case, it is unlikely to hold the ground. If the situation deteriorates some sterner method will of necessity be adopted, and if the situation improves and the clouds roll away it will be impossible to obtain 250,000 recruits to meet a menace that will no longer exist.

'Meanwhile it must be pointed out that a situation which justifies such an unprecedented step as the doubling of the Territorial Army establishment must surely also call for an increase in the time given to the training of that army for war. To send untrained troops into battle is both a crime and a blunder, but to increase

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the period during which volunteers are taken away from their work would constitute an increase in the penalty which we already impose on patriotism, greater possibly than patriotism could bear.

'You are asking a great deal of young men who have to give up the whole of their annual holiday as well as a great many of their free evenings. You are asking in some cases even more of their employers, who have to dispense with their services for a fortnight of what may be the busiest season of the year. What increases the bitterness of the sacrifice is the knowledge that their unpatriotic competitors are taking advantage of their patriotism to steal a march.

'This unfair, undemocratic and unscientific system must be abolished. Our youthful Dominions have already set us an example, and we must not lag behind Australia and New Zealand in adopting some measure of compulsion. In a dramatic speech during the last war Mr. Lloyd George accused the Government, of which incidentally he was himself a member, of having been too late in all their decisions. We must avoid a repetition of the same mistake. There is no more tragic phrase than the words "too late".

'Having thus closed our ranks and mobilized our resources, we must join hands with our friends who henceforward will be our allies. The time has passed for haggling over terms or hesitating at commitments. Small nations and great are threatened with destruction. The common peril should ensure a common front, but this can only be achieved by the unqualified undertaking "all for one and one for all". Any nation that joins the alliance against tyranny and barbarism should be assured

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of the full support to the last man and to the last shilling of the whole combined alliance.

'It is still possible, while these words are written, that the presentation of such combined force will impress the minds of those with whom force is the only argument. There is still time for repentance. There is still time for them to come to the conference table, where their empty seats have been awaiting them these many years, and in an atmosphere of peace and harmony discuss their claims. There is still time for those claims to be satisfied and for an agreement to be reached whereby armaments, instead of being increased, would be diminished.

'Alas, there are two obstacles in the way of such a happy conclusion. One of the Dictators has said that he does not desire lasting peace, and the other has proved that his word can never be trusted.

'So, while still hoping for the best, we must prepare for the worst. Nor need we fear that that worst will prove too terrible. We have frightened one another long enough with tales of London lying in ruins and the end of civilization. Our defences are in order, our plans are made, our resources are immense, our hearts are stout. Stern trials await us. We shall face them with the fortitude with which our fathers faced them in the past, believing, as they did, that it is better to die as free men than to live as slaves.'

In the week following the publication of the article the unprovoked attack upon Albania took place which will be dealt with in the following chapter. The ultimate effect of this event has already been referred to but while it seemed still uncertain what that effect would be, I wrote another article urging a more imaginative policy

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in dealing with the refugee problem and suggesting that some use should be made of this accession of man power in order to increase our fighting services.

* * * *

‘The reign of terror which the Nazi party have established in Germany and which has been extended to every country that falls under German domination has created a new problem for the rest of the world.

‘There are some hundreds of thousands of homeless people whose crime is either that they have held political opinions of which Herr Hitler does not approve, or that they have running in their veins the blood of the race which gave us the Bible and which is the object of Herr Hitler’s undying hatred. When the history of this dark period comes to be written and the relapse of so large a part of Europe into barbarism is recounted, other nations will be largely judged by the attitude that they adopted towards the victims of the new persecution.

‘The ordinary Englishman, kind-hearted but unimaginative, is inclined to shrug his shoulders and exclaim: “It is all very terrible, but it is not our business. We have our own unemployed to think of first; charity begins at home. Am I my brother’s keeper?” With these familiar tags he salves his conscience and goes on his way.

‘When recently one small party of refugees, who had succeeded in reaching this country, were carried shrieking back to the airplane for deportation, our easy consciences received a sharp twinge, which was, however, satisfactorily relieved on the following day when it was reported that this particular party had, after all, been allowed to remain. But this case was not an isolated one

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and every day the Press reports incidents which ought to be read with horror.

'Last Friday there was a case at Hove. A former sergeant in the Vienna Police, aged forty-one, who had been sent to a concentration camp when the Nazis occupied Austria for the crime of having faithfully served the old regime, and who on being released had walked from Vienna to Antwerp and subsequently reached England, was sentenced by the Mayor to fourteen days' imprisonment and recommended for deportation. It was not even suggested that he had committed any other offence than that of being born a foreigner.

'This is a curious comment on the eloquent appeal which Lord Baldwin addressed to the nation a few months ago when he said: "I plead to you for the victims who turn to England for help. They may not be our fellow subjects but they are our fellow men. The honour of our country is challenged, our Christian charity is challenged and it is up to us to meet that challenge."

'The reply to that plea is fourteen days' imprisonment to be followed by deportation.

'Ignorance is more often the cause of wrongdoing than evil-mindedness and the present policy with regard to the treatment of refugees is based on ignorance.

'People believe, and it is not unnatural to believe, that the amount of employment in this country is fixed and limited and that every job that is given to a foreigner means the loss of a job to a British subject.

'This belief is wholly false, as was the earlier belief, firmly held by the vast majority of the population, that the introduction of machinery, by which the work of many men was performed by one machine, must inevit-

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ably produce a diminished demand for labour. It seemed obvious, but it was not true. The result of introducing machinery has been an enormous increase in the demand for labour and in the population. An increase in the population, however produced, increases the demand for goods and therefore increases production.

'The Home Secretary stated in the House of Commons last December that 11,000 refugees had been settled in Great Britain and as a result about 15,000 workers had been employed who would not otherwise have been employed. Throughout our history until the present time we have always welcomed to our shores those who were flying from persecution and we have always been well rewarded for the welcome that we gave.

'A volume might be written on the contribution that refugees have made to the development of our industries. Now for the first time we have reversed this policy.

'There would possibly be some excuse for such a reversal of policy if we were already faced with the problem of over-population and if the continued increase of it was likely to cause grave embarrassment in the near future. The opposite is unfortunately the case.

'In a work entitled *The Population Problem*, by Mr. T. H. Marshall, it is stated that if the present decline in population continues this country will, within the lifetime of people now living, be reduced to nearly half its population, and that this process will continue.

'The author writes: "The only things that can stop it are a return to larger families than we have to-day or great and continued immigration from abroad."

'In the face of scientific facts like these, the policy of turning away useful, able-bodied, hard-working, honest

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immigrants is a policy of criminal lunacy. While we are chasing these people from our shores we are at the same time going through the slightly humiliating process of holding meetings all over the country at which leaders of public opinion implore our own fellow-citizens to fill up the glaring gaps in our defences.

'We need over 200,000 men in the Territorial Army and there is in fact no hope of obtaining them so long as we adhere to the voluntary system which the present Government refuse to abandon. There are thousands of refugees longing to come to this country and to serve us as soldiers or in any other capacity.

'Throughout history, in every country, exiles have made the best soldiers. There is no finer regiment in the French Army than the Foreign Legion, which is largely recruited from Germans. When I suggested in the House of Commons last month that a foreign legion should be formed in Great Britain, the only reason that I was given why such a suggestion could not be adopted was that a foreign legion would not be suitable for service in India or the Colonies. That was in fact no reason at all.

'With the large increase of our military establishment which has now been decided upon, it will plainly be unnecessary for every unit to do a term of foreign duty. We are in urgent, almost desperate need of man power at the present time. Scientific inquiry proves that that need is going to increase rapidly and that the declining population may prove disastrous to our Empire.

'Yet we are refusing to admit the stream of immigrants, which we have always benefited from in the past, and which we have greater need of now than we ever had before.

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‘In this matter, as in so many, sound policy coincides with sound ethics. If it were not so, the ethical argument ought still to outweigh the political. Even if it meant imposing a burden on our over-burdened people, even if it meant a few more living on the dole and slightly higher rates and taxes, even so it would surely be the duty of a country that has so long had the enviable reputation of being a home for the wanderer and a haven for the persecuted, to maintain that reputation in a period when there are more wanderers and more persecuted than ever before.

‘Charity should no doubt begin at home but it should not end there, for if it does it is likely to lose the quality of charity altogether and to become self-interest.

‘The cry “Am I my brother’s keeper?” was the excuse of the first murderer and the reply to it throughout the ages has been a thunderous affirmative.’

On April 25th it was announced that the Government had decided to introduce compulsory military service and two days later the Prime Minister moved a motion on the subject in the House of Commons.

I made a short speech in the course of the debate that followed — I said:

‘We all regret, I am sure, that a Division has to be taken in this House this evening. It is too late, of course, to appeal to the leaders of the Opposition to reverse the decision that they have already taken. Personally, I think that if those who will study to-morrow the figures in the lobby could read also the speeches that have been delivered to-night, the effect of those figures would be far less harmful than I am afraid it is likely to be. We have not heard, even from the benches opposite, any very

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violent denunciation of the principle of compulsion, which is what we are really discussing. Hon. Members have devoted large portions of their speeches to criticism of the Government's foreign policy and of the particular proposals which will form the substance of the Bill to be discussed next week, but they have not, I am glad to say, any of them denounced as unacceptable at all times some measure of conscription.

'The Hon. Member for East Woolwich [Mr. Hicks], who has just sat down, delivered a sincere and in some points an impressive speech, but a great deal of it seemed to me to be directed more against than for the argument he was trying to sustain. He told us of all that he and his colleagues and those who work with him in the Trades Union Congress have done, and how far they have succeeded in assisting the Government in carrying out the task of preparation, but if, in spite of all that, the Government are now convinced that that is not sufficient, surely the Government are the people in the best position to know, and surely the very magnitude of the effort that we have made proves the magnitude of the menace which still hangs over us. I think the only point at which the Hon. Member went a little too far was when he suggested that the Government were now under the influence of their military advisers, the influence of the jack-boot. I do not think the Prime Minister would ever come under the influence of the jack-boot. Certainly, so far as the tenure of office of my Right Hon. friend the Secretary of State for War is concerned, I think history shows that the boot has been on the other leg.

'But the principle which we are discussing to-night, whether in an emergency we should insist upon every

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man doing his duty as we consider it necessary for the State, is one on which I should have thought there could be no two opinions in the Labour Party, and it seems to me that the Labour Party are once again missing one of their great opportunities. I believe myself that it is due unfortunately to the influence that is exercised on the party by the Trades Union Congress, and if there were any members of the Carlton Club who showed Leftist tendencies, I think they should be recommended to take a course of Conservatism from the Trades Union Congress. The Hon. Member who has just sat down told us that it would be impossible for the Trades Union Congress to alter a decision except at an annual conference.'

Mr. Hicks: 'No.'

'Well, except at a special conference. That shows that even the machinery of the Trades Union Congress is somewhat unwieldy. The principle of conscription is one which, as the Hon. Member for East Woolwich suggested, is not the basis of the Totalitarian States. The principle of calling on every man to do his duty in defence of the State is as old as democracy itself. It was revived in Europe by the French Revolution, it was abandoned by the French Government under Napoleon III, the least democratic government the French have ever had, and it was restored again by the Third Republic. It is a principle which admits and insists upon equality, a principle which is opposed to privilege and favouritism.

'The Right Hon. gentleman quoted the Prime Minister's statement that it was the injustice of the present system which was responsible for the decision that has recently been taken. I think the Prime Minister is correct

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in saying that the voluntary principle is unjust now, whereas it was not unjust in the past. When we could be satisfied with a very small Territorial Army, we could depend almost entirely on people joining it because they liked soldiering. There is an enormous number of people to whom the military profession appeals, who do not mind giving up a certain number of nights in the year to drilling, and who thoroughly enjoy a fortnight a year in camp. I remember that before the War and before there was a Territorial Army, when I was at school, I joined the Volunteers, but it never occurred to me that I should do so because it was my duty. I am not sure it would have had a great effect upon me if I had thought so. The alternatives that presented themselves to my mind were whether or not it would be fun. At that time the majority of boys at my school did not join the Volunteers, but I thought that on the whole it might prove amusing, and so I joined. So long as a very small Territorial Army was sufficient, one could rely upon that supply of young men who liked to join, but now hundreds and thousands of young men who do not like drilling at all, who hate to spend a fortnight in camp, who much prefer to spend a large portion if not all of their annual holiday elsewhere, and whose industrial and professional career might be seriously interfered with by training — hundreds and thousands of them are joining now solely because they think it is their duty, while others, who also may think it is their duty, are not joining. That is why what worked quite justly under the old system has become injustice to-day.

‘The cry for the conscription of wealth has been raised, as it always is on these occasions, by Hon. Members

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opposite, and I would like to ask what they really mean by the conscription of wealth. Do they mean the confiscation of all private profit? I do not think they do. I maintain that the conscription of wealth, in the sense in which we are asked in this House to approve the principle of conscription, exists to-day. The Government elected by the people have the right — and nobody has ever questioned it — to take any portion of a man's private wealth from him. My Right Hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer told us only two days ago the exact proportion of our private wealth which he needed to take this year. The principle exists and is effective. Hon. Members may say that you ought to take a great deal more, but that is simply a question of the administration of the principle. Some Hon. Members this evening have suggested that we should make a greater demand on the youth of the country than is being made. Some people think that we should start at 18 or 19 years of age and carry on to 22, 23, or 24 years of age. That is a difference of administration, a difference of degree, but not a difference of principle. Equally, whether you should have a tax of 10s. or of 19s. in the £ is a difference of degree, not of principle. The principle of the conscription of wealth in this country exists to-day and has existed for years.

'I am sorry that the Right Hon. gentleman the Member for Caithness and Sutherland [Sir A. Sinclair] was unable to approve of the Government's proposals to-night. I think he was rather sorry himself, although it seems to me that there is much greater difficulty for the Liberal Party than for the Labour Party in accepting this interference with individualism. I was not surprised that my

Right Hon.

~~Castle~~ ~~where~~ ~~under~~ ~~as~~ ~~Lyme~~ ~~[Colonel Wedgwood]~~ ~~who,~~ ~~as~~ ~~he~~ ~~said~~ ~~himself,~~ ~~would~~ ~~be~~ ~~prepared~~ ~~to~~ ~~do~~ ~~anything~~ ~~and~~ ~~to~~ ~~swallow~~ ~~any~~ ~~st~~ ~~principle~~ ~~in~~ ~~order~~ ~~to~~ ~~defeat~~ ~~the~~ ~~enemy,~~ ~~yet~~ ~~found~~ ~~this~~ ~~an~~ ~~extremely~~ ~~difficult~~ ~~principle~~ ~~to~~ ~~swallow.~~ ~~The~~ ~~Liberal~~ ~~Party~~ ~~have~~ ~~long~~ ~~stood~~ ~~for~~ ~~individualism,~~ ~~for~~ ~~*laissez-faire*,~~ ~~for~~ ~~Free~~ ~~Trade~~ ~~—~~ ~~all~~ ~~excellent~~ ~~things~~ ~~in~~ ~~their~~ ~~time~~ ~~—~~ ~~for~~ ~~all~~ ~~of~~ ~~which~~ ~~philosophies~~ ~~as~~ ~~philosophies~~ ~~there~~ ~~is~~ ~~a~~ ~~great~~ ~~deal~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~said.~~ ~~But~~ ~~they~~ ~~have~~ ~~one~~ ~~thing~~ ~~in~~ ~~common~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~late~~ ~~Mr.~~ ~~Gladstone~~ ~~against~~ ~~them,~~ ~~and~~ ~~that~~ ~~is~~ ~~that~~ ~~they~~ ~~are~~ ~~stone~~ ~~dead.~~ ~~I~~ ~~think~~ ~~the~~ ~~most~~ ~~effective~~ ~~part~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~speech~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Right~~ ~~Hon.~~ ~~gentleman~~ ~~the~~ ~~Member~~ ~~for~~ ~~Caithness~~ ~~and~~ ~~Sutherland~~ ~~was~~ ~~not~~ ~~that~~ ~~in~~ ~~which~~ ~~he~~ ~~was~~ ~~questioning~~ ~~the~~ ~~principle~~ ~~of~~ ~~compulsion,~~ ~~but~~ ~~that~~ ~~in~~ ~~which~~ ~~he~~ ~~violently~~ ~~attacked~~ ~~the~~ ~~suggestion~~ ~~that~~ ~~it~~ ~~should~~ ~~be~~ ~~limited~~ ~~to~~ ~~men~~ ~~of~~ ~~one~~ ~~age~~ ~~only.~~ ~~I~~ ~~returned~~ ~~only~~ ~~this~~ ~~morning~~ ~~from~~ ~~Paris,~~ ~~and~~ ~~I~~ ~~can~~ ~~assure~~ ~~the~~ ~~House~~ ~~that~~ ~~the~~ ~~effect~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~announcement~~ ~~there~~ ~~of~~ ~~this~~ ~~new~~ ~~development~~ ~~in~~ ~~policy~~ ~~was~~ ~~electric.~~ ~~I~~ ~~was~~ ~~addressing~~ ~~the~~ ~~English~~ ~~colony~~ ~~on~~ ~~Monday~~ ~~evening~~ ~~and~~ ~~they~~ ~~all~~ ~~asked~~ ~~me~~ ~~one~~ ~~question.~~ ~~In~~ ~~my~~ ~~speech~~ ~~on~~ ~~Monday~~ ~~evening~~ ~~I~~ ~~was~~ ~~rash~~ ~~enough~~ ~~to~~ ~~say~~ ~~that~~ ~~I~~ ~~was~~ ~~convinced~~ ~~that~~ ~~sooner~~ ~~than~~ ~~any~~ ~~of~~ ~~them~~ ~~expected,~~ ~~compulsion~~ ~~would~~ ~~be~~ ~~adopted~~ ~~in~~ ~~this~~ ~~country.~~ ~~When~~ ~~it~~ ~~was~~ ~~adopted~~ ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~following~~ ~~day,~~ ~~I~~ ~~got~~ ~~no~~ ~~credit~~ ~~for~~ ~~making~~ ~~that~~ ~~rash,~~ ~~though,~~ ~~as~~ ~~it~~ ~~subsequently~~ ~~proved,~~ ~~true~~ ~~prophecy.~~ ~~They~~ ~~all~~ ~~thought~~ ~~that~~ ~~I~~ ~~was~~ ~~“in~~ ~~the~~ ~~know”~~ ~~and~~ ~~that~~ ~~I~~ ~~had~~ ~~received~~ ~~private~~ ~~information,~~ ~~which,~~ ~~indeed,~~ ~~I~~ ~~had~~ ~~not.~~ ~~But~~ ~~in~~ ~~France~~ ~~there~~ ~~has~~ ~~been~~ ~~going~~ ~~on~~ ~~for~~ ~~many~~ ~~weeks~~ ~~an~~ ~~intensive~~ ~~anti-British~~ ~~campaign.~~ ~~It~~ ~~has~~ ~~always~~ ~~been~~ ~~the~~ ~~policy~~ ~~of~~ ~~Germany,~~ ~~both~~ ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~battlefield~~ ~~and~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~council~~ ~~chamber,~~ ~~to~~ ~~divide~~ ~~Great~~

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Britain from France. It was with that object that she launched her armies in March 1918, and so nearly achieved it. She has had the same object in mind during March and April 1939. In 1918 the attack was thrust back and the situation was saved by the promotion of Marshal Foch to the supreme command. In the same way attack on Great Britain in Paris and throughout France this year has been defeated by the decision of His Majesty's Government to adopt the compulsory principle.

'Preparations are going on very rapidly in France — much more rapidly than we are led to believe by the announcements in the Press. It is not the policy of the French to say too much of what they are doing, but in every household and in every shop you find that things are being delayed, that orders are not being carried out, owing to men — middle-aged men — being called back to the colours for a short period of intensive training. I asked whether the men who were called up ever grumbled and I was informed that such was never the case. On the contrary, so my informant said, most of the men look back to their year or two years of military training as the happiest period of their lives. They have left school, they have got away from the tiresome control of the pedagogue, and they have not yet entered on the daily task, on the irksome and responsible and often dreary drudgery of working life. For a year or two they are care-free. They are associated with men of their own age, all on the threshold of their careers. When the short day's duty is done, they are free to amuse themselves as they wish, and when, in after years, they are called up for a week or two, they go back from their work and sometimes from

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their homes, with considerable relief. They look forward to recapturing for a short period what to some, in a more fortunate existence, is the freedom of university life, which many people would like to recapture if it were possible.

'This, as has been explained by the Prime Minister, is only to be a temporary measure. Whether it proves temporary or not, I cannot say that I share the fears which have been expressed of its eventually becoming a part of our national life. I think in all the great democracies of the world where it exists, it is a useful force. A year's health and training and camaraderie, with the complete extinction of all class differences during that period, works in the long run for the good of the community. I believe that this temporary measure which has been forced upon us by a terrible emergency may prove, in the end, a source of health to our manhood and enjoyment to our people and a bridge over those divisions of class which cause so much ill-will, and have caused so much ill-will in the past, and that it will prove, as it has in those other countries, a sound foundation and backbone of democracy.'

It will be seen that I spoke immediately after Mr. Hicks, but that I made little comment on the speech he had delivered. I had felt more sympathy with what he had said than I expressed, and I felt afterwards that I had hardly done him justice. In pressing the adoption of conscription on the Government I had always insisted upon the importance of obtaining the co-operation of the trade union movement in introducing it. The Government, acting in haste after long delay, had denied themselves the time to seek the goodwill of the Trade

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Unions. I hoped that it was not too late to correct this error and the following week I published an article on the subject:

* * * *

‘In the important debate that took place in the House of Commons last week on the subject of conscription, there was no speech delivered that deserves greater attention than that of Mr. George Hicks, Member of Parliament for East Woolwich and General Secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers of Great Britain and Ireland.

‘It was in the first place the speech of a patriot. Nobody has ever doubted, though many are occasionally inclined to forget, the sound patriotism of the trade unionists.

‘“We love our country. Make no mistake about that,” said Mr. Hicks.

‘The plain statement, devoid of rhetoric, carried conviction to the heart. It came as a timely reminder to some of us who feel so passionately in favour of conscription at the present time, that in moments of controversy we are tempted to question the honesty of the conviction of others.

‘There was evidence also of the native shrewdness of the British trade unionist. Referring to the speech that Herr Hitler was then about to deliver, Mr. Hicks expressed the view that if it were extremely bellicose and threatened immediate war, there would be no cause for alarm, but that if it was of a pacific character, if the soft pedal were applied, then we had better look out.

‘And the warning was accompanied by an expressive wink which would have convinced anybody who saw it

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that whomever else Herr Hitler may deceive, he will never be able to bamboozle the British working man.

'It is devoutly to be hoped that the warning will have been taken to heart, not only by Mr. Hicks's fellow trade unionists but also by those in higher places who have been so disastrously eager to accept at their face value the assurances of the Führer.

'It is devoutly to be hoped that his Majesty's Ambassador will at last grow tired of obsequiously waiting on Herr von Ribbentrop's doorstep and being turned away by the sniggering flunkies in order to make room for the representative of Jugoslavia.

'Trade unionists, however patriotic and shrewd as they may be, are, like many of us, far from perfect. Good qualities often carry their defects with them. The defect of patriotism is self-importance — the defect of shrewdness is suspicion.

'Running through Mr. Hicks's speech there was noticeable a sense of injury. "We were doing our best to make one system work successfully; why has another been adopted without consulting us? If the Government wanted more men why didn't they say so? We would have done our best to supply them."

'It is difficult not to feel some sympathy with the complaint. The true answer, possibly, could not be given. It could not be said that the Government themselves had only made up their minds — or changed them — at the last minute; that the reluctance of certain members of the Government — and not the least important — had been so hard to overcome that no time had been left for consultation with the Opposition, if the announcement was to be made before Herr Hitler spoke.

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'The Trades Union Congress do not like to be hustled. They are a slow-moving body, slower than the Cabinet, and they were very badly hustled last week.

'If a man who is inclined to be suspicious, finds himself hustled in a crowd, he will immediately suspect that somebody is trying to pick his pocket. The trade unionists, who are exceptionally prone to suspicion, finding themselves hustled into conscription, suspect immediately that there is a hidden trap and that the rights which they have fought for so steadfastly and cling to so tenaciously may be in danger.

'In the calling to the colours of a single category of men they detect the very thin end of an enormous wedge.

'The trade unions represent a very important section of the manhood and the opinion of the country. They have been flustered and offended. Their pride has been hurt and their suspicions aroused. They have gone off on the wrong tack. It is of the highest importance that their energies should be reorientated in the right direction. Here is a problem of statesmanship that should not prove impossible of solution.

'There is nothing in the philosophy upon which trade unionism is based which quarrels with the principle of conscription. Trade unionists believe that the state should insist upon the employer observing certain rules and paying certain wages even though it be possible and profitable for him to do otherwise.

'They believe that men have a duty to the State and that the State should insist upon their doing that duty.

'The first duty of a citizen when the State is in danger is to defend it. Why should trade unionists object to the State insisting upon the performance of that duty?

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'I have recently received a copy of a deeply interesting document which has been addressed to Sir Walter Citrine by a dozen signatories who describe themselves as members of the rank and file of the Trade Union Movement.

'The covering letter is dated April 26th, but the printed manifesto which it encloses and which is headed "Conscription and the Unions" must have been drawn up before it was known that the Government intended to introduce conscription last week. The message it conveys is short and simple:

' "Is it not time the working man began to think? It is he who will take the can back, if war comes. It is he who will be fighting in the trenches while the bombers smash in his little home . . . Let us speak now before it is too late. Our homes, the progress of our class, the peace and freedom of this country and of the world, demand that this country be put under orders now — orders to wealth as well as labour — orders to the country as a whole. . . .

' "Compulsion has no terrors for the working man. He has known it all his life. All his life the working man has fought for freedom. If he can teach this lesson to the country now, he can yet save the country and world freedom."

'The document concludes with a programme including restriction of profits, drastic measures to deal with unemployment, compulsory training, civil or military, with compensation for dependents and expansion of the armament programme without interference with the social services.

'I hope and believe that these opinions are shared by

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many of the more vigorous and thoughtful members of the working class and that they have only to be more widely preached in order to find almost universal acceptance.

‘Meanwhile, it is for the Government to heal the breach with the trade unions, which should never have been allowed to occur, to meet them half-way — and further than half-way if that be necessary — in order to unite in policy and action a people that are already united in heart.’

CHAPTER VIII

ITALY

WHEN Mr. Eden resigned from the Cabinet in February 1938, the immediate issue between him and the Prime Minister was whether or no an effort should be made at that time, to settle our differences with Italy and to conclude a friendly agreement. Behind this immediate issue there existed other broader and profounder divergencies of view. Since I had joined the Cabinet I had acquired a sincere admiration for the manner in which Mr. Eden had handled the problems of foreign affairs during the two years that he had occupied the position of Secretary of State. The only subject upon which I had ever differed from him was that which eventually led to his resignation.

I had believed that when the Abyssinian war was over and sanctions had been withdrawn, we should have lost no time in restoring our friendship with Italy. It had seemed to me that this should be possible and even easy, because both sentiment and self-interest ought to render the Italian people anxious for good relations with Great Britain. In the Italian struggle for liberty during the nineteenth century, the Germans and Austrians had been the enemies of Italy, the English and French had been her friends. If Germany should prove successful in her efforts to dominate the continent of Europe, Italy would be quite unable to hold her own, alone, against so great a neighbour, and would rapidly sink to the

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position of a vassal state. If, on the other hand, England and France succeeded in thwarting the ambitions of Germany, and in maintaining the freedom of the smaller states, Italy knew that she had nothing to fear from those who were her allies in the last war, and had remained her good friends until 1935. Italy is more vulnerable to naval attack than any other country in Europe, and therefore has most to fear from an enemy who possesses a powerful fleet. Until 1935, Signor Mussolini had proved himself a friend of peace in Europe. Peace was badly needed for the completion of his work at home, and peace could be most easily secured by lending the support of Italy to the peace-loving democracies. No man had denounced more sternly than Signor Mussolini the brutal murder of Herr Dolfuss by Nazi agents, and no man had employed more opprobrious and scathing terms than he in describing the present rulers of Germany.

For all these reasons I had hoped that it might prove possible to come to an agreement with a man whose earlier work in his own country I had admired, and therefore, while I deeply regretted Mr. Eden's resignation, I sincerely supported the policy which the Prime Minister then pursued.

At the time of the assassination of Dolfuss, Signor Mussolini had mobilized on the Brenner Pass, and Herr Hitler had then abandoned his intended assault upon Austria. When in March 1937, a month after Mr. Eden's resignation, the German rape of Austria was effected, it appeared that Signor Mussolini was not consulted and it was believed that he had keenly resented this sign of his declining prestige. At the time of Munich there was good reason for thinking that if war had resulted, Italy would

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have hesitated to take part. She had made hardly any preparations to do so. On the international commission which was then set up to delimit the frontiers of Czechoslovakia, I was told that the only resistance that Germany's demands encountered came from the Italian representative.

Still, therefore, clinging to the hope of improved relations with Italy, I wrote the following article which appeared on November 22nd:

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'Last week saw the conclusion at Rome of the final stages of the Anglo-Italian Agreement. That event should re-establish those happy relations which have existed between the two peoples since Italy first became a united nation.

'The links that hold us together are of far greater antiquity and belong to the very earliest days of our history. For a period as long as that which now divides us from the earliest colonization of America, Britain was a Roman province. For four hundred years the Romans lived here, bringing with them their civilization and leaving the tradition of it behind.

'That tradition remained a living thing in spite of the efforts of the barbarians, who came after the Romans left and sought to obliterate it. Nor have we been unmindful of the debt that we owe to Italy. When in the last century the Italian people were held down under a cruel and foreign despotism, the British people sympathized with their sufferings and applauded their efforts to free themselves from the alien tyranny.

'When one of their oppressors who had ordered the flogging of women visited London, the common people

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Abyssinia — a period of thirteen years — no cloud troubled the blue sky of Anglo-Italian relations, and during the whole of that period the influence of Signor Mussolini in the councils of Europe was definitely on the side of peace.

‘Concerning the Abyssinian episode, the less said now the better. When old friends are reconciled after a quarrel, it is always dangerous for them to discuss its original cause. Such discussion, begun in the friendliest atmosphere, very often ends in an explosion, and the quarrel begins all over again. Let the past therefore be forgotten, and let us turn our eyes to the future.

‘The prospect is not discouraging. There seems to be no reason why the interests of Great Britain and those of Italy should ever clash. Italy has urgent need of peace to consolidate and develop her Empire. Her European frontiers are satisfactory, she has scope for colonization in Africa, and her highly-civilized population abominate war.

‘There are only two clouds on the horizon, one is the continuance of the Spanish tragedy and the other is the apparent reluctance of Italy to extend to France the goodwill that she has shown to Great Britain.

‘With regard to the former, as it becomes increasingly plain that neither side will ever accept defeat, so it becomes increasingly urgent to find a solution which will not be wholly unsatisfactory to both.

‘Immense as the difficulties are that stand in the way of any such settlement, they should not prove insurmountable if approached by the statesmen of Europe in a spirit of determination and goodwill.

‘Our own Government have expressed the view that the

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Spanish situation is no longer a menace to the peace of Europe. It is devoutly to be hoped that such optimism will be justified.

‘Our friendship with France is fundamental to our foreign policy; nothing can be allowed to disturb it. Therefore, if our restored friendship with Italy is to flourish, an improvement in her relations with France will be required. The only obstacle to such an improvement remains the Spanish question.

‘What Napoleon contemptuously referred to as the Spanish ulcer contributed largely to his ultimate downfall. Such another ulcer may yet prove fatal to Europe. It demands instant surgical attention.

‘So long as the two Latin sisters remain on opposite sides of the Spanish barricade, so long must the magical word “appeasement” mean very little in practice.

‘The Italians are even more closely bound by blood and history to the French than to ourselves, and the French have often served as a link between us.

‘It was through France that the spirit of the Renaissance, which came back with the returning troops of Charles VIII from Italy, eventually reached England, and ever since the cultures of France and Italy have been closely allied.

‘That great poet and patriot, who died not long ago — Gabriele d’Annunzio — was bilingual, speaking French and Italian with equal facility and distrusting, it must be admitted, England as much as he distrusted Germany.

‘There is place and to spare in the Mediterranean and along the broad coast of Northern Africa for the French, the Italian and the British Empires.

‘In Italy’s great struggle for freedom, already referred

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to, it was the French who sent not only sympathy but armed force to her assistance, armed force which ultimately proved decisive.

‘In these days of fate it is to be hoped that Italy will not be forgetful of her past and will realize where and with whom her true interests must lie in the future.’

Unfortunately, during the week that followed the publication of this article, there occurred in the Italian Chamber of Deputies that curious episode when the majority of those present raised with great enthusiasm the cry of ‘Tunis, Corsica, Nice’. Although such claims were treated in Paris with the derision they deserved, they seemed none the less to shut the door upon any immediate hope of improving the strained relations which existed between France and Italy.

There were many who thought that in these circumstances it would be well for the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary to postpone their previously announced visit to Italy. I did not share that view and when they set forth in the early days of 1939 I wrote an article on the subject which appeared on January 10th:

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‘To-day the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the Foreign Secretary set forth upon the road to Rome. It would require a volume to give a brief account of famous journeys to Rome in ancient, medieval and modern times. Yet it may happen that the visit of this week will prove as important in the history of the world as any that has ever taken place.

‘The two statesmen upon whose shoulders such grave responsibilities now rest must carry with them the goodwill and the God’s speed of all their fellow countrymen.

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Theirs is a high task. They bring to it great qualities — dignity, integrity and courage.

‘Some have expressed doubts as to the wisdom of this visit, others have regretted that the Prime Minister did not tell the House of Commons before starting what he intended to say when he arrived. There is little force in either criticism. We may prefer the methods of the old diplomacy when all important business was conducted by trained and experienced specialists, and when the heads of States — if they met at all — met only to confirm formally agreements already reached.

‘But we must move with the times, however much we may deplore the direction in which the times are moving. Direct communication between responsible leaders is a modern development in diplomatic technique which no single country can afford to neglect.

‘As for the suggestion that fuller information should be given in advance of conversations, which if they are to be profitable must also be confidential, such information, if given, could only hamper the liberty of whomever gave it. The Democracies must trust their leaders as the Totalitarian States are compelled to trust theirs. When the democratic leaders are no longer trusted there exist constitutional methods of replacing them.

‘We do not know what matters are to be discussed at Rome, but of one thing we can be certain — the manner in which our Ministers will be received by the people of Italy. It will not be the regimented enthusiasm of an official reception, the co-ordinated cheers of a distrustful and half-resentful populace, compelled to participate in a national welcome to distinguished visitors.

‘It will be the heartfelt, whole-lunged acclamation of a

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great people, fortified with true knowledge of their own history, paying spontaneous tribute to the representatives of a country that has ever been their firmest friend, and adding to it a personal greeting of gratitude and affection to the man who they believe did more than any other to preserve at a critical moment the peace of Europe.

‘But when the tumult and the shouting dies, when the real business begins in the tranquillity of the council chamber, what then is going to be demanded of our representatives? What are they going to give in response to those demands? What are they going to get in return? These are the questions that are occupying to-day the minds of all who are interested in foreign affairs.

‘Let us therefore in the first place be clear as to the aims and ambitions of Italy, and endeavour to form an opinion as to how far they are justified and to what extent they can be met.

‘Italy is a Mediterranean power. She is the only Great Power whose whole existence is centred in the Mediterranean. It is the Mediterranean Sea which washes all the shores of Italy and those of almost all her possessions. For Great Britain the Mediterranean is a useful, but not an irreplaceable highway which links together her Eastern and her Western Empire, but to Italy the Mediterranean is a matter of life or death.

‘If the Mediterranean were closed to the merchant ships of Britain they could travel at some inconvenience and delay round the Cape of Good Hope, but if it were closed to the merchant ships of Italy she would forfeit 86 per cent of her foreign trade, and ruin would stare her in the face.

‘The Mediterranean is an inland sea to which there are

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three entrances — the Suez Canal, the Dardanelles, and the Straits of Gibraltar. Over none of these entrances does Italy exercise the slightest control.

‘The first is in theory international, but in fact under the control of a French company, in which the British Government is the principal shareholder.

‘The second is in the possession of Turkey and the third is dominated by the British possession of Gibraltar.

‘It is not unnatural that Italy should resent the fact that the sea which she considers her own sea — *mare nostrum* — should have a sentry of a foreign Power set over every gate. Here it may well be contended exists a grievance for which a remedy might easily be found.

‘Italy’s principal foreign possession is the vast territory of Libya in Northern Africa, so closely adjacent to the southernmost point of the island of Sicily as almost to form a second Straits of Gibraltar. Alongside of it lies the French province of Tunis, which has frequently in the past proved a source of contention between France and Italy.

‘Those troubles were supposed to have been satisfactorily settled by a treaty concluded between Signor Mussolini and Monsieur Laval in 1935. That was the year of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, when it was important for Italy to have the goodwill of France. Part of the price paid for that goodwill was Mussolini’s agreement to all Italian schools in Tunis becoming French schools in 1945 and all Italian nationals in Tunis becoming French citizens in 1965.

‘This treaty, from which he has received all the benefits and fulfilled none of the obligations, has recently been denounced by Mussolini. The procedure is as

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simple as to promise to pay a man on Saturday for work performed on Monday, and, the work having been performed, to call the agreement off in the middle of the week.

‘That there is a large Italian population in Tunis nobody denies, and that the French may be unsympathetic with the aspirations of foreign nationals in their colonial possessions is possibly the case, but there is a right and wrong way of approaching every problem, and the finding of a satisfactory solution must largely depend upon the way in which the problem is approached.

‘The wrong way is obviously the unilateral denunciation of a treaty before the obligations imposed by it have been performed. Still worse are the vociferations of responsible officials on an occasion of state.

‘The parrot cry “Tunis, Corsica, Nice!” might be pardonable if raised by a mob of excited and ignorant students. But it was initiated, not it seems without instructions and rehearsal, by the Italian Chamber of Deputies sitting not far from where once the Roman Senate sat.

‘If it be true that the Duce dreams of restoring the Roman Empire in all its glory, he should remember that “gravitas” was the distinguishing characteristic of a Roman in Rome’s greatest days, and that in the Senate House the Conscript Fathers retained their dignity even when they had lost their power.

‘Italy has no stronger claim to Nice than France has to Naples. Corsica once belonged to England, but never to Italy. These, however, are Franco-Italian matters in which Great Britain is not directly concerned, and there will doubtless be sufficient Anglo-Italian questions in the

Mediterranean and the Near East to provide ample material for discussion.

'The attitude of the British people toward such questions, with the details of which they are not acquainted or concerned, may be briefly summarized. The British are prepared to make great sacrifices for the sake of peace, but they are beginning to get a little tired of making great sacrifices and not getting any increased assurance of peace in return for them.

'They are a generous people and hesitate less than most to pay a high price; but the one thing they hate is to be done in the eye. They were promised peace on September 30th, but they are not sure that they got it.

'Any future bargains will be carefully scrutinized, and unless there is something substantial on the credit side they will be condemned.

'And are the views of the Italian people so widely different? We say lightly, "Italy wants", this, that, or the other; but the citizen who is eating his spaghetti in the trattoria, the fisherman who is mending his nets on the beach, the peasant who is driving his oxen home in the evening, the gondolier who is singing on the Grand Canal — are their minds occupied with the problem of nationalities in Tunisia, with the custody of the Rock of Gibraltar or with the ownership of shares in the Suez Canal?

'No.

'They are grateful to their Duce for having restored order in their country, for having found work for their hands, for having set the name of Italy high among the nations and for having extended the bounds of their Empire.

'And now they would ask of him to crown his

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achievement by giving them what all the nations of the world desire — peace.'

It must be admitted that in this article, as in the previous one, the Italian question was approached in a mood of conciliation and goodwill. If similar sentiments had inspired those who were responsible for the fate of Italy, as they certainly did inspire the envoys of Great Britain, much good might have resulted from the visit to Rome. But it was not to be so. Little seems to have taken place there, except empty protestations of friendship. My one prophecy, however, was borne out. The welcome extended by the Italian people to the English Ministers exceeded all expectations and differed so profoundly from that with which Herr Hitler was met, as to produce a deep impression upon all who saw it.

During the gradual deterioration of Anglo-Italian relations that has ensued, the one bright spot on the horizon has continued to be the friendly feelings towards Great Britain which still exist in the hearts of the Italian people. All the evidence of those who have visited Italy during this period confirm this statement.

On Good Friday, April 7th, without a word of warning or a shadow of excuse, Signor Mussolini, imitating the technique of his master Herr Hitler, invaded, conquered and annexed Albania. On the following Tuesday I published an article on the subject in which I suggested that the present year could hardly prove suitable for a General Election, in which I urged the extension of our commitments in Europe and in which I once again insisted upon the urgent necessity for some measure of compulsory service.

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'Another blow has fallen. Another proof has been given that friendly and peaceful relations are as impossible with Signor Mussolini as they are with Herr Hitler. Where there is no mutual confidence, no reliance upon good faith, there can be no friendship and no peace.

'Signor Mussolini has now demonstrated that his word is worthless. He has treated the Anglo-Italian Agreement of less than a year ago as contemptuously as Herr Hitler treated the agreement of Munich. The crime of Good Friday was in every respect as vile and as shameless as the crime of the Ides of March.

'It is noteworthy that these most recent examples of power politics in practice have not been accompanied by the hypocritical excuses and false assurances which the Dictators used to consider as necessary sops to the Cerberus of public opinion. But this time we are not told that the Albanian people have long been clamouring for union with Italy, nor are we assured that the conquest of Albania marks the end of Italy's territorial ambitions in Europe.

'There is therefore no longer any excuse for being blind to the facts. Even the dictators' apologists in this country — a dwindling band who begin to hang their heads — must understand what now stares the whole world so blatantly in the face.

'Germany and Italy under their present rulers are determined to dominate by force the whole continent of Europe. If there is a man living who still doubts that fact he should lose no time in consulting a mental specialist.

'There are therefore only two possible policies open to Great Britain, acquiescence or resistance. The former

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means the end of our Empire and our independence. It may therefore safely be assumed that we shall adopt the latter. Such a policy has, in fact, already been adopted. The Prime Minister's blunt declaration that Great Britain would not tolerate any interference with the integrity of Poland has committed this country to resist further aggression.

'And the country was glad to be so committed.

'Most evils bring some compensating good. The great evils that the last three months have revealed in Europe have during the last three weeks brought one great good to Great Britain. They have produced a foreign policy that has the support of all parties, and they have proved once again the solidarity of our own people in the face of danger.

'The task is now to make the most of that solidarity. While that iron is still at white heat we must beat it into a shape that may daunt and must defeat our enemies. Much valuable time has been lost. By working in double shifts we may retrieve it.

'All the energies of every citizen should now be devoted to one end — that of preparing our country for an emergency.

'Party warfare is dying down. Any revival of it now would be unthinkable. Public-spirited people, accustomed to playing leading parts in local affairs, are now very fully occupied with A.R.P. or kindred activities. No question of party politics is allowed to interfere with the progress or the personnel of bodies engaged in national work of such importance, and nobody would wish to see such work frustrated or delayed by the need for preparing a political campaign.

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'But we have been expecting, and in normal circumstances not unnaturally expecting, a General Election in the autumn of this year. A General Election in the autumn demands some measures of preparation beginning not later than the spring.

'Rumours are already rife that such preparations are in hand, and that the wheels of the great machine are being oiled preparatory to being set in motion.

'The present Parliament has eighteen months to run. A year and a half can pass before there is any constitutional need of a General Election. No evidence exists that the people of this country are anxious for an opportunity of recording their opinions. The opposite is the case.

'An exceptionally large number of by-elections has given proof of an exceptionally static state of public opinion. No demand for a General Election has been made, or seems likely to be made by the Opposition.

'At the best of times a General Election is a necessary evil. It causes a temporary disturbance to trade, it holds up normal processes and produces a short period of anxious uncertainty.

'From a political standpoint its consequences are even less desirable. It must of necessity exaggerate the differences that divide parties and increase the bitterness of party warfare. The great political issue of to-day is international. That issue, it is devoutly to be hoped, would play no part in a General Election.

'We should therefore be compelled to give exaggerated importance to matters of minor interest.

'It would be a sorry spectacle, while ruin was hovering over Europe, to see the leaders of the political parties of

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Great Britain making fiery speeches on such subjects as pensions for spinsters and the taxation of land values.

‘It would be more than a sorry spectacle, it would be a branding shame — an infamy that might possibly prove the death warrant of democracy.

‘The sooner, therefore, that the spectre of a General Election is exorcised the better. A word from the Prime Minister would be sufficient to scatter it into thin air. It is to be hoped that such word will be spoken without delay, for it would serve both to dispel the menace and to bring home realities to those who are still reluctant to face them.

‘At the same time the guarantee that has been given to Poland should be extended. The time for limited commitments has passed. Poland possesses no special claim on our good offices. Holland, Denmark, Switzerland, Greece, Yugoslavia and Roumania should receive similar assurances.

‘If they are asked for they should not be denied either to Bulgaria, to Turkey or to Russia.

‘Determination and audacity are demanded to deal with dangers that daily increase. We cannot afford to allow another victim to fall into the insatiable maw of the invaders. Industry should be placed immediately upon a wartime footing. Only so, as the Secretary of State for War himself has admitted, can we possibly produce in time the equipment for the army that we shall need.

‘Recruitment for that army must be further expedited, though it is difficult to see how that can be accomplished so long as the manifest folly of the voluntary system is retained. In any case, all preparations for the enforcement of a compulsory system should be completed in

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order that when the time comes it will be necessary only to press a button.

‘If the Government could give now some public assurance that they themselves have understood that that time must eventually arrive it would do more to hearten our friends and sober our opponents than anything that has been said or done hitherto.

‘The opinion still prevails in Europe that Great Britain is not in earnest. We must prove that we are — but first and foremost we must convince ourselves.’

So faded the hopes to which I had clung so long, of improved relations with Italy. The Anglo-Italian Agreement had turned to dust and ashes; the Prime Minister’s visit to Rome had been only waste of time; Mr. Eden had been right.

CHAPTER IX

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BISMARCK lays it down in his memoirs that no man who is engaged in public life should allow his private preferences or predilections to have any effect upon his policy. He also makes the interesting admission that the foreigners whom he himself had always found most agreeable were the English.

I, from my earliest years have loved France. There I spent in my youth many interesting months learning the language, there in later years my happiest holidays have been passed. I remember that even when I went out to the last war I was glad to feel that I should be in France. French history and literature have always delighted me and I have even attempted to write a biography of a French statesman. No country has more varied or more beautiful landscape to offer, no country produces so many and such excellent wines. No other people have so successfully mastered the art of living in a civilized way.

Yet I hope that none of these reasons has influenced me in consistently supporting the closest possible understanding between England and France. Study of past history and of present problems has convinced me that such an understanding should at all times form the cornerstone of European solidarity and peace. I have been fortified in my opinion by remembering that it was shared by

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statesmen so different in outlook as Talleyrand and Oliver Cromwell.

Relieved of the cares of office at the end of September, I wanted a short holiday before the beginning of the new session and I was fortunate enough to spend a week of perfect October weather in the autumnal glory of Versailles.

We are too apt when we travel abroad to retail the conversation of a dozen natives whom we happen to meet as representing the public opinion of that country. Such reports should always be given and accepted with caution. It did however appear to me at that time that the policy of Munich had had an even better reception in Paris than it had had in London. There were exceptions of course to the general chorus of approval but on the whole I found my French friends more difficult to convince that I had acted rightly.

I remember at this time somebody arguing with me as follows: 'You hope that this policy will succeed although you fear it won't. Why not have remained in the Government and worked for its success rather than resigning?' I replied that according to our Cabinet system, every Cabinet Minister must give his explicit approval to every major decision of the Government. I had been due to speak at a large public meeting the week after the Munich settlement. There could be only one subject mentioned at that meeting and I should have been obliged to praise a policy that I deplored. In other words I should have been obliged to say what I did not think. At a time when democratic systems are falling into disrepute it was, I considered, of the first importance that a certain standard of conduct should be maintained in public life and that

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Ministers should never be suspected of preferring office to principle.

It was during this visit that I was approached with the proposal that I should *faire une conférence* in Paris on the international situation. I use the French phrase because it is not easily translatable. Neither 'to give a lecture' nor 'to make a speech' conveys the correct impression. The *conférence* was to take place at 5.30 p.m. at the Théâtre des Ambassadeurs. I expressed doubts as to the attendance for it seemed to me unlikely that there would be many people in Paris willing to pay in order to hear an English Member of Parliament discuss the international situation. When, however, the time arrived, I was surprised to learn that such had been the demand for places that it was desired to repeat the performance on the morrow, which I agreed to do but refused to make a third appearance which was suggested for the following day. I am afraid it would be very difficult to fill a London theatre in similar circumstances in order to hear the views of a French politician.

The event took place on December 7th. I spoke in French, and the following is a translation of what I said:

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'Ladies and Gentlemen,

'I accepted two months ago the invitation that I received to talk to you this afternoon on the subject of Anglo-French Relations and Peace. I did not know at that time that my visit would coincide with that of an eminent German statesman. Herr von Ribbentrop has come here as a messenger of peace. I hope that no word of mine will interfere with any efforts that may be made to improve relations between the two countries. The title

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of my address chosen two months ago proves that it is of peace before all things that I am thinking. I am convinced that the cause of peace is best served by those who speak frankly, who tell the truth and who do not hesitate to recognize facts as they are.

‘Are we then to suppose and believe that our two great countries will continue in the future to act in common as they have in the past and that they will not cease to recognize the fact that in their eyes the chief interest of the world is the maintenance of peace and that they will unite their efforts towards this objective? It is my intention this afternoon to inquire whether it is probable that our common efforts directed towards this end will succeed and what is the best method to pursue in order to ensure that they shall.

‘The world to-day is in fearful danger. The future of our civilization is at stake. There have in the past been many civilizations. They have all perished. It was no cataclysm of nature that destroyed them for we may be permitted to entertain certain doubts as to the historical authenticity of the Flood and so far as the civilization of Sodom and Gomorrah is concerned, its disappearance does not appear to have been an unmixed disaster.

‘All civilizations of which we have historical knowledge have been destroyed by man himself. The various types of man that have destroyed these civilizations have varied from age to age but they have all had one characteristic in common. The destroyers have always been inferior to those whom they have destroyed.

‘The doctrine of the survival of the fittest may be sound when applied to the animal world in general and it may even be sound when applied to human beings

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if by "the fittest" we mean the most brutal and the most pitiless, but the study of the greatness and the decay of culture must lead to the conclusion that the higher civilization inevitably perishes at the hands of the lower. Man's origins are in the marsh and the mud. He has ever strived to raise himself above these lowly beginnings and it is upon these infirm foundations that he has attempted to build structures which will bring him nearer to the stars. But every time that he has set up such an edifice and climbed to the top of it his inferior brothers have succeeded in overthrowing it and bringing him low. After many centuries Man begins the efforts all over again and seeks once more to build on new foundations. He gathers together perhaps a few stones from the ruins of his earlier efforts but always the result is the same. During the last fifteen centuries we here in southern and western Europe have been seeking to build up something durable out of the ruins of Rome and Greece. Although we may not have yet succeeded in constructing anything as imposing as was the City of Athens 400 years before the birth of Christ, we have accomplished something of which we need not be ashamed.

'It is not difficult to understand why the more civilized man should be the victim of the less civilized. In the first place, the more a race is civilized, the more likely it is to produce a large variety of different types. Savages all believe the same thing, all think and act in the same way and all obey unhesitatingly the orders of the chief of the tribe, however cruel and foolish they may be. Civilized beings, on the other hand, differ violently between themselves on all matters of faith and opinion. *Tot homines, quot sententiae* applies to the most highly developed races

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rather than to the primitive ones and because they differ among themselves it is less easy for them to unite for a common end. It is not easy for them to accept the orders of higher authority. They criticize the wisdom of those who govern them, they hesitate to obey a leader of whose sagacity they are not sure. It must be evident that the horde, whose chief is their God, whose obedience is blind and who have only one idea, which they all share, must be better material for the purposes of war than a society of individuals with a broad and critical outlook, who keep alive in their hearts the spirit of independence and revolt.

‘The man living in a lower type of civilization possesses another great advantage. The manner in which he regards the outbreak of war differs fundamentally from that of his more civilized contemporary. The former has been taught to regard war as a glorious adventure, whereas the latter can only see in it an act of criminal folly. To the one it presents itself as a road to fame and honour. In the eyes of the latter it is nothing but the bottomless pit of senseless destruction.

‘Not only does the pseudo-philosophy of the barbarian encourage him to consider war as one of the stern necessities of existence, but also the kind of life that he leads makes him look forward to war as an agreeable alternative. When freedom of speech and of thought are suppressed and the arts disappear, life itself becomes dull and monotonous. There is something in the nature of man that demands change and variety and these are the two things which war alone seems to offer to those who are living under a tyranny. But those, on the other hand, who lead a full life and who consider that intellectual,

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scientific and artistic effort should be the reason and the object of existence, are bound to consider war as the end of everything that is desirable.

‘But, I may be asked, why talk of barbarians and of the lower types of civilization? Such terms surely can apply only to the native populations of Central Africa, of South America or of the Antipodes, from whom surely we have nothing to fear. It is indeed melancholy to feel bound to bring such an indictment against a great people, who in the past have made numberless contributions to the literature, art and science of the world, but I hold it just and necessary to state plainly that a regime which begins by the public burning of books, which continues by abolishing freedom of thought and of speech, which persecutes religion and which seeks by cruelty to exterminate an ancient race that gave Christianity to the world amongst other benefits, is barbarous in the worst meaning of the word and is the enemy of true civilization.

‘The first weakness, therefore, that the civilized man will show in his dispute with the less civilized is a moral weakness. A gentleman will suffer from the same disability if he enters into an argument with a drunken tramp. The gentleman knows that the tramp will use language that he himself would be ashamed to employ and he knows also that if the argument goes too far the tramp will not hesitate to employ force which the gentleman would be unwilling to do even though he might be the stronger of the two.

‘During the last twenty years every effort has been made in France and in England to impress upon the minds of the present generation a most profound hatred of war. At school and in church, at the cinema and in the

theatre, and throughout the novels that they read, they have been taught that there is nothing more vile, more detestable and more disastrous than war, while in Germany, during the last five years at least, and to some extent for a much longer time, the present generation has been taught that war is one of the noblest activities. It should therefore be plain that we ought now to modify this doctrine and while detracting nothing that has been said concerning the horrors of war, we should remind our fellow citizens that there are in this world things that are even worse. While it is right to avoid war because we hate it, it is wrong to avoid it because we fear it. Sooner or later, the nations whose policy is governed by fear must become the vassals of those whose policy is governed by courage and resolution.

‘Our disadvantages in face of our potential enemies are not however limited to the moral sphere. It is time that we should recognize that the political machinery which exists in both our countries is somewhat old-fashioned and out of date and was never constructed to deal with the demands and difficulties of the modern world. Our parliamentary and administrative system in England has changed little since the eighteenth century. It was admirably adapted to a period when news travelled on horseback or by sail and when a minister had always adequate time to consult his colleagues before taking the more important decisions. This system collapsed during the last war and it collapsed during the last crisis. It is no longer suitable to the perpetual crisis in which we are living at the present time. It would be presumptuous on my part as a foreigner to criticize the parliamentary and administrative system of France, but I may be allowed to

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remind my audience that this system dates from 1870 and that it has undergone very slight modifications since, whereas the world has changed perhaps more during the last sixty-eight years than at any other comparable period.

‘In making these preliminary remarks, I have sought to suggest to you that if France and England wish to maintain the peace of the world they can only do it by their own strength and that, putting aside for the moment the question of armaments, their strength is at present seriously undermined, first by the moral weakness which is inseparable from the higher type of civilization and secondly by the political weakness which is due to our retention of systems of government which are out of date and which were never intended to deal with modern dictatorships.

‘In the long history of Anglo-French relations there have been many victories and many defeats — sometimes the one country has conquered and sometimes the other, but always one of the two has been the victor. At Munich in the early hours of September 30th this year, France and England underwent for the first time a common defeat. It is a melancholy fact, but failure to recognize it as a fact would only render the results of it still more disastrous.

‘Just twenty years ago France and England brought the most terrible war in history to a glorious and victorious conclusion. The task on which we had been engaged for four and a half years was ended. At times it had seemed almost beyond human strength, but our determination to triumph in spite of all had surmounted every obstacle and had ended by destroying the most

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formidable engine of war that the world had ever seen. To-day we cannot but ask ourselves, especially those of us who took part in that struggle, what was the cause for which our friends and our brothers sacrificed their lives. Was the cause worth so great a sacrifice and what has been the result? False history and the speeches of demagogues sometimes disguise the simple truth. We did not fight for the independence of Serbia; we did not fight to protect Belgium, which had already been overrun almost before the beginning of the war; we did not fight, to use the famous phrase of President Wilson, in order to "make the world safe for democracy". We fought to prevent one power succeeding in establishing by force her supremacy over the whole of Europe and finally over the whole world. That was the cause for which so many human beings poured out their blood. And when at the end that power was utterly defeated it did seem that those lives had not been sacrificed in vain. Can we say the same thing to-day? Is it possible that owing to a lack of energy, of which our two countries are equally guilty, over a period of twenty years we have allowed this work, which the death of millions of men consecrated and sanctified, to be spoilt, lost and thrown away as if it had never been.

'To-day we find ourselves face to face with a Germany which seems hardly less powerful and certainly much more aggressive than the Germany of 1914. In the place of a population of 60 millions, she has one of 80 millions, and a new philosophy, more odious and more dangerous than any the Hohenzollerns ever preached, is being taught and deeply imprinted on the exceptionally receptive minds of a warlike race. Every German is being

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taught to-day from childhood not only that it is his duty to be a soldier but also that war is a noble and glorious occupation and that the best of all deaths is on the battlefield. The whole nation to-day is subject to the will of a single man. There is no longer a constitution as there was at the time of the Kaiser. There is no freely elected parliament, freedom of speech and of the Press have disappeared and the abolition of all these institutions makes the country much more formidable in war time. The man who has raised himself to this position of supreme power is a remarkable individual. He is quite sincere, he is quite pitiless and he has written a book which is freely distributed to the population and in which he exposes his intentions with the greatest clarity. These intentions he carries out without ever abandoning one of them. He has changed but one line of his programme and only on one point has he altered his principles. When he wrote his book he denied that he had the least desire to get back the colonial empire of Germany. To-day he denies it no longer. That intention alone he has changed. So far from having diminished his programme in any respect he has made an important addition to it. Every other item of that programme remains intact and one of those items is the destruction of France! We have been witnesses of the gradual carrying out of the plan, step by step. Germany withdrew from the League of Nations; she re-introduced conscription, which was a violation of the Treaty of Versailles; she reoccupied and fortified certain territories on the banks of the Rhine, which was a violation of the Treaty of Locarno; she conquered Austria by force, and after having threatened Czechoslovakia, she has established her dominion over it. It should also be

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remembered that when he broke the Treaty of Versailles Herr Hitler solemnly swore that he would keep the Treaty of Locarno, and when he broke the Treaty of Locarno he solemnly swore that he had no further territorial ambitions in Europe. He repeated this solemn promise after the invasion of Austria and after the partition of Czechoslovakia.

‘Let us face the facts. We have allowed the Germans, whom we defeated in 1918, to reconstruct an empire more powerful and almost more formidable than the Germany of 1914. Some people will question the accuracy of the words “almost more formidable” and may think that they ought to be replaced by “much more formidable”, but for my part I doubt it. In the first place, we must remember that the German fleet to-day is negligible in comparison with the German fleet of 1914. Battleships cannot be built in secret or with great rapidity and we shall therefore be well aware of any plans for increasing the size of the German Navy. So far as submarines are concerned, which so nearly proved fatal to the cause of the Allies in the last war, we believe that science has made much progress and the problem of anti-submarine defence is almost solved. In any case the submarine will not play such an important role in the future as it did in the past. It is true that the military aviation of Germany is at present superior to that of France and of Great Britain but in view of the mechanical ability and the inventive gifts of our two nations there is no reason why we should not in the near future make good the difference that now exists.

‘Too much attention has lately been paid to statistics concerning population and I recently read a statement,

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attributed to a distinguished Frenchman, according to which the population of Germany, being now 80 million and that of France 30 million, it was no longer possible for France to resist Germany. At the same time attention was drawn to the fact that at the time of Louis XIV the population of France was equal to that of the rest of Europe and that at the time of Napoleon the population of France was three times that of Great Britain. But these two examples seem to prove exactly the opposite to that which the speaker who made use of them was anxious to prove. Louis XIV, in spite of the size of the population of his kingdom, failed to impose his will upon Europe; and England, in spite of her small population of 10 millions only, was able to continue the struggle against Napoleon for twenty years — sometimes without a single ally — and emerged from it eventually victorious. It is quite a new theory that the strength of a country can be measured by the size of its population. If it were true, we should be forced to the conclusion that China is the most powerful country in the world.

‘Nor is it necessary to approach this problem as though France were obliged to face Germany alone. The populations of France and England combined are hardly inferior to that of Germany, while if we include the populations of the French and British Empires, we have an enormous superiority. The French Republic and the British Empire combined are still the most formidable alliance that the world can show. Nor does this alliance lack friends and supporters. There are many smaller nations in Europe who still look towards us with hope — hope which has been darkened and discouraged, it is true, since the capitulation of Munich — but it still exists and

would not be slow to revive if there were in our two countries signs of a renewal of energy and self-confidence. In addition to these smaller powers, there exists one source of strength upon which it is difficult to place reliance but which nevertheless is immense — that of Russia. It would perhaps be imprudent and dangerous to rely upon what must ever be unreliable but it would be still more foolish to exclude Russia from our calculations merely because we feel we cannot rely upon her. In spite of the fearful injuries that she continues to inflict upon herself, in spite of the folly and the madness which seem at times to direct her internal politics, she remains now and always a gigantic figure on the horizon and a vast potential source of assistance. Nor does this list exhaust the names of those who might rally to the defence of the cause of liberty. On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean there rises the vast and friendly shadow of the United States, whose citizens daily grow more conscious of the fact that they are citizens not only of the United States but also of the world and that crimes committed in Europe are crimes against a common civilization in which they with us are not only sharers but standard bearers.

‘In the last war America came to the assistance of the Allies, perhaps a little late, but her assistance was decisive. It is always dangerous to prophesy in politics but it is at least pardonable to express the hope that in a future war such assistance from America, while it might come sooner, would certainly not be less decisive.

‘Finally, we possess one last advantage, more precious than all those of which I have already spoken. We are free peoples. Through many centuries, through many

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struggles, through bitter travail and bloody sweat, we have won for ourselves this inestimable privilege of freedom. During a long period of peace this very freedom may seem a source of weakness. We quarrel among ourselves, we shamelessly expose our internal differences to the whole world, but the knowledge that we so gain of our own imperfections and the exaggerated idea of them that we give to others are for us in time of war a precious source of strength, because at the country's call our internal differences disappear as though by magic and the enemy, who thought to find us engaged in a fratricidal struggle, suddenly discovers that he is face to face with a united people.

'The contrary takes place in a country subject to a dictatorship. The artificial unity which such a country presents to the world in time of peace is a source of weakness and danger in time of war. Criticism and opposition having been driven by terror underground, multiply in secret, like rats in the foundations of a building, and await the day when they feel themselves strong enough to come out in the open and deal the fatal blow to the system which they detest. Which was the first nation to break down in the last war? It was not one of the smaller or feebler nations, it was not Belgium nor Serbia; although they were overwhelmed, they never surrendered. It was Russia, the vast, wealthy Russia, free from attack, impregnable against invasion, with its population of 160 millions and with its limitless resources — it was Russia that first gave way under the strain of war, and the reason of Russia's defeat was that her despotic system of government was hated by a vast section of the population, who in time of peace did not dare to oppose it. Such has

always been the fate of powers who refuse to their citizens the right of criticism. They nourish in their own body the poison which must kill them in the end. The democracies, on the other hand, will always have allies whose numbers it is impossible to calculate, within the interior and even within the battles lines of those states where dictators reign supreme.

‘Let us then not make the mistake, which is made so often in France and England, of underestimating our own strength and that of our friends and of exaggerating the power of those who might become our enemies. We are often warned against the dangerous propaganda of Germany but I sometimes feel that the most dangerous propaganda is that which we carry on ourselves.

‘I have sought here to explain the reasons why we should not regard the possibilities of war with excessive pessimism. Perhaps I shall be told, therefore, as those of us often are who have favoured a more vigorous policy, that I am in favour of war and should not regret to see it break out. Nothing could be further from my thoughts or from the truth. There is no greater advocate of peace than I — save those who believe in a policy of non-resistance. I do not believe that you will avoid war by following a policy of continuous concessions. There are no limits to the demands that will be made on you, but there is a limit to what honour and self-respect will allow you to concede. It is possible that when you reach that limit you will have given away and conceded so much that your chances of victory will have disappeared, but even so there will be in both our countries a majority of noble spirits who will prefer defeat to dishonour and who will accept death rather than slavery.

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‘No; the way to peace lies not along the road of concession. There is one way, I am convinced, not two, but one way only, which may yet prevent the outbreak of European war. We must persuade those who might make that war that they will be certain to lose it in the end.

‘If Germany had known in 1914 the forces which would be opposed to her in 1918 she would not have been so foolish as to enter upon the struggle. It is therefore our duty so to conduct our policy as to convince Germany, that she would bring about again the same disaster, that once again the same Powers would fight against her for the same cause and that these Powers would be better prepared and better armed than they were twenty years ago, and they would not again forget so swiftly or forgive so easily a people who twice in one generation had been responsible for a catastrophe that had almost destroyed our civilization.

‘Allow me to sum up in a few words all that I have attempted to say this afternoon. It is not Europe only, but civilization itself, the cause of liberty and all those things which the free peoples of the world consider sacred, which are to-day in mortal danger. But they can be saved if France and England remain firmly united and gather together all their resources in common in order to present an invincible resistance, and rally to their cause all those other nations who desire to preserve their independence. By so acting they will present to the powers of aggression so formidable a barrier that nobody will dare to attack it. It is in this way and in this way only that they can preserve peace but they must act without delay or it will be too late.’

I formed the impression that the favourable reception

accorded in France to the Munich agreement was largely due to the troubled times through which the country had been passing since the formation of the government of the Popular Front. Strikes and internal disorder had shaken the nerves of the nation. Civil war on the other side of the Pyrenees brought the danger of Communism to the frontier, gold was rapidly leaving the banks and any peace seemed better than war.

The weakness of France, of which exaggerated rumours were repeated in England, had an inevitably discouraging effect. People lightly reported that the French air force was non-existent and that the country was on the verge of revolution. These rumours did not, I think, have much effect upon the Cabinet and they had none upon the Prime Minister. He has been represented in some quarters as frightened of Communism and having secret leanings towards Fascism. Nothing could be further from the truth. Mr. Chamberlain is neither a Fascist nor even a reactionary Tory. He has remained what he was brought up, a Liberal Unionist. I know that his brother Sir Austen always objected to being called a Conservative. But there were and there remain many among his supporters in whose minds Communism remains the principal bogey and who are always inclined to regard France with suspicion as a dangerously democratic ally with too many revolutions to her record.

It was in the hope of removing such suspicions that on my return from Paris I wrote an article on the situation in France, entitled 'Another French Revolution?'

'Since the days of Caesar the Gauls have been addicted to the practice of civil war. In twenty centuries they have not outgrown this unhappy propensity. It has been, and

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it remains, their principal source of weakness, although it is due to some of the finest qualities inherent in the race.

‘English ignorance of Europe is in nothing more apparent than in the pictures that the Englishman draws of the various types which he believes to be representative of foreign countries.

‘All foreigners are in an Englishman’s eyes slightly ridiculous. The comic traits which particularize a Frenchman are, so the English believe, levity, excitability and excessive gaiety. The Frenchman on the English stage is expected to be prodigal of gesture, to be always on the point of explosion, and inclined either to dance or to break into song.

‘This is the opposite of the truth. The French are the most serious people in Europe, and the most sober. They take life seriously, they take politics seriously, and, although it may surprise many people to hear it, they take religion very seriously indeed.

‘A French politician could not denounce an opponent for pursuing a policy that must prove fatal to the interest of France, and sit down to dinner the same evening with the man whom he had so denounced in an atmosphere of perfect amity. That Englishmen can do such things and escape criticism is a standing source of amazement to our neighbours, and the only explanation they can find for such conduct leads them to the conclusion that it is we, not they, who suffer from incurable frivolity.

‘When during the General Strike of 1926 they learnt that in many places football matches between police and strikers had been arranged, they exclaimed in exasperation: “Here are a people who cannot take even their own revolution seriously.”’

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‘The same principle applies to religion. It is to be feared that in England there are too many people who are indifferent in religious matters, who never visit a church save for a wedding or a funeral, but who would unhesitatingly write themselves down “Church of England” whenever called upon to do so.

‘But if a Frenchman does not accept the Church he is an “anti-clerical” because he believes that the Church is wrong and therefore he wishes to destroy it.

‘Now, although it may be a hard saying, the man who hates the Church and wishes to destroy it is a more religious man than the man who cares for none of these things. The fact that there has never been an anti-clerical party in England does not prove that we are a deeply religious people, but the reverse.

‘The gay and debonair Henri IV, who said that Paris was worth a Mass, was a less typical Frenchman than his grandson Louis XIV, who revoked his Edict of Nantes and so abolished religious toleration and drove the Huguenots from the land.

‘During the critical period through which we are passing, division of opinion in France is bound to be more profound and the outward manifestation of it more violent than in Great Britain. As a result the friends and allies of France are often alarmed and anxiously ask one another whether there is any likelihood of a revolution. Better comprehension of the true sources of France’s weakness may enable us to answer the question.

‘One of the main causes of the feeling of insecurity in France is the widespread lack of respect for the Constitution. In Great Britain people frequently make jokes about the House of Commons, some even go so far as to

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make jokes about the House of Lords; but respect for Parliament is deep-seated and almost universal.

'The Constitution, however, of the Third Republic has never inspired reverence. It is a compromise, and the French hate compromises. Its continued existence is probably due to the fact that, while it is as much detested by the extreme Left as by the extreme Right, both fear that if it went, something worse might succeed it.

'The minds of most Frenchmen of the wealthier classes at the present time are beset by two terrors, and we cannot properly appreciate their point of view unless we make full allowance for both.

'In the first place, they fear the vast military machine which is being constructed with ever-increasing rapidity on the other side of the Rhine. In the second place, they dread the appearance in their native land of the red spectre of Communism.

'These conflicting motives have produced cross-currents which have so confused the old political division and mixed up Right and Left that when the Comte de Paris, the Bourbon claimant to the throne, recently made a speech to his supporters it was criticized on the ground of its leanings towards Communism.

'While the extreme Right see much to admire in the modern methods of Germany, and while Monsieur Flandin sends telegrams of congratulation to Herr Hitler, the extreme Left are beginning to lisp the language of Chauvinism and have abandoned the "Internationale" for the "Marseillaise".

'One result of the intensity with which Frenchmen hold their opinions is the doubt that they too easily entertain of the motives of those who differ from them.

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It is not so easy for a Frenchman as it is for an Englishman to believe that views which he considers both detestable and fraught with ruin for his country may be perfectly honest held by a perfectly sincere patriot. Sinister transactions are therefore not only suspected but alleged.

‘To disapprove of the policy of Munich is to incur the suspicion of being a paid agent of the Soviet Government. Those so suspected are not slow to retort that the Soviet is not the only Government that has funds at its disposal and that the enemies of France have never been niggardly in rewarding their servants.

‘Both accusations are doubtless false. I have a personal friend, a Frenchman of the highest intelligence, whom in twenty years I have never been able to convince that the British Government does not expend large sums annually in subventions to the French Press.

‘I believe that there is no danger of revolution in France and very little danger of Communism. Two elements in the nation’s life give permanent grounds for confidence — one is a citizen army as loyal and patriotic as at any period of France’s history; another is a vast population of peasant proprietors, deeply attached to the soil of the country that they own.

‘The recent complete collapse of the threatened general strike goes far to confirm optimism, while it is to be regretted that the employers’ having had their victory must also insist upon having their victims. Again it is due to the implacable spirit of a logical, serious-minded people who cannot treat a quarrel like a game and shake hands when it is over.

‘Those, however, who may be tempted or may be too willing to believe that these bitter feuds in peace time

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would prove a source of weakness in war, are mistaken. Before an external threat the ranks would close with the rapidity of lightning and Europe would see again a united people. Whereas in those countries where artificial unity is preserved by force in peace time, the day of battle would disclose the deep fissures which undoubtedly lie beneath the glossy surface.'

In March 1939, in the week following Germany's shameless and perfidious invasion of the poor remains of Czechoslovakia, the President of the French Republic was due to return the visit which the King and Queen of England had paid to Paris in the previous summer. At one moment it seemed impossible that all the feasts and festivities that had been arranged in connection with the President's reception could be carried out. But calm was maintained, the President arrived and every item of the previously prepared programme was performed. The article that I wrote on this occasion recalls the mood of the time, satisfaction that the Democracies had refused to allow their plans to be disturbed by panic, and anxiety lest their calm should be mistaken by their enemies for apathy.

* * * *

'If the future had been foreseen — and it certainly was not — no more suitable moment than this could have been selected for the visit to London of the President of the French Republic. Proof of the close friendship which now unites the two nations is no longer needed, but evidence of it is always welcome, and never more welcome than at a time when violence and perfidy are once more disturbing peaceful conditions on the continent of Europe.

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‘The cordial relations that now happily exist between France and England afford an important lesson that we should all take to heart in these anxious days. They prove that there is no natural hostility between any two peoples, and that whatever their history may hold of strife and enmity, there is no reason why they should not come together in the end and understand one another all the better for their past differences.

‘There are probably no two nations that have been at war with one another more often and for longer periods than the French and English, and in those unhappy wars many incidents occurred that might have left behind them the seeds of lasting rancour.

‘The history of no country is so fascinating as that of France, containing, as it does, two scarcely credible but authentic fairy stories. One is the story of the peasant girl who put on armour, who went from keeping sheep to commanding armies, and who in a series of victories drove away the invader from the soil of her native country.

‘Hardly less wonderful is the story of the penniless lieutenant who in a few years made himself an Emperor, who created kingdoms for his brothers, who for nearly twenty years was undefeated in battle and to whom all the sovereigns of the Continent did homage. But both these astonishing tales have tragic endings, and in both of them England is the villain of the piece — for it was the English who burnt the Maid at Rouen and it was the English who sent the Emperor to pine away on a lonely island.

‘But these old wrongs are all forgotten, or only remembered as the quarrels of childhood are remembered

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by grown-up people who are, indeed, the firmer friends on account of the memory of past blows and tears. There is no reason why all enmities should not be composed in the same manner where there is goodwill in the hearts of the people and wise statesmanship at their head.

‘Wars in the past were perhaps easier to forget owing to the spirit of chivalry in which they were conducted. We all remember how after the King of France had been captured in battle the Black Prince waited himself upon his prisoner at table. We remember, too, how when the blind King of Bohemia — that name which rings a knell in our hearts to-day — perished fighting gloriously against us, the Black Prince out of admiration adopted the dead king’s motto for his own, “Ich Dien”, which remains to this day the motto of the Prince of Wales.

‘There is another Anglo-French prisoner-of-war story, belonging to a much later period, which illustrates the relations that could still exist between captor and captive even in the Napoleonic age. The Count de Montrond, wit and dandy, intimate friend of Talleyrand, fell into the hands of the English and was for some time a prisoner in a British man-of-war. He soon established excellent relations with the officers and became an honorary member of the mess.

‘After dinner one evening the captain, more convivial than courteous, gave the toast, “Frenchmen”, and added, “They are scoundrels without exception”. Montrond drank the toast and proposed another, “I drink to the English”, he said. “They are a nation of gentlemen, but”, bowing low to the captain, “there are exceptions”.

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'The reception that was accorded to the King and Queen during their visit to Paris last summer was, according to the testimony of all who witnessed it, something that had to be seen to be believed. It was the spontaneous outpouring of the heart of a whole nation. Neither was it limited by time nor circumscribed by space.

'Long after their Majesties had departed their appearance on the cinema screen was greeted by prolonged applause, and while they were in Paris ordinary English tourists travelling in the provinces were more than once made the subject, somewhat to their embarrassment, of pro-English demonstrations, and found themselves the centre of cheering crowds.

'It is one of the disadvantages inseparable from the Republican form of government that no President can hope to command the prestige and glamour of a crowned head. But M. Lebrun, who is now concluding his term of office, has an impeccable record of achievement through seven long, anxious years, and we must see to it that the welcome we accord to him is worthy of the occasion, is a just tribute to the man and a convincing proof of our affection for the country that he represents.

'The English are not a demonstrative people. Cheers stick in our throats. Self-consciousness glues our hands to our sides. Englishmen fear making fools of themselves more than they fear death.

'So, Monsieur le President, I hope you will forgive us if you detect a host of glum and stolid faces among the crowds that come and greet you, if they gaze at you with the faint astonishment with which they contemplate the animals at the Zoo, if when they remove their

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hats they do so with obvious reluctance, replacing them as quickly as possible as though they were afraid of catching cold, and if when they wave their arms they wave them in a slightly furtive manner as though they had sworn to their mothers that they would never commit such an action in their lives.

'Though their gestures are awkward, Monsieur le President, their hearts are sound, and they are beating faster to-day at the cry of "Vive la France!"

'Some will regret that the programme does not include any naval or military demonstration. When the King went to Versailles the French army and air force were paraded for his benefit and the spectacle was deeply impressive.

'Foreigners may wonder that while Europe is rocking the whole British Cabinet should spend three successive evenings at a banquet, a ballet and a theatrical performance. But so long as the days are filled with firm statements and with swift decisions it may perhaps be well to continue in the evenings the old English tradition of Drake finishing his game of bowls on Plymouth Hoe with the Armada in sight; and of Wellington attending the Duchess of Richmond's ball in Brussels on the eve of Quatre Bras. The only danger is that of creating a false impression in the minds of a less civilized people. In July 1914 Germany believed that France was decadent and that England was on the brink of civil war. Too late she learnt her error. It is our duty to save her from repeating the same calamitous mistake.'

My first visit to France in 1938 was in connection with the formation in Paris of a branch of the Society of St. George. This branch decided to hold their first public

dinner on April 24th and were good enough to invite me to attend. I have no record of the speech that I made on this occasion, but I ventured to prophesy that Great Britain would adopt some measure of conscription sooner than was generally expected. When on the following day the announcement was made that conscription was to be introduced forthwith, I received no credit for prophetic powers but only for having been in possession of inside information, which was not, in fact, the case.

During this visit I had a conversation with Count Coudenhove-Kalergi to whose work I have referred in a previous chapter. He expressed his confidence that war would be avoided but insisted upon the importance of increasing British propaganda in Germany. He believed that the Nazi regime would eventually be overthrown but the revolution that would overthrow it must come from the Right rather than the Left. Fear of Communism rendered the Right temporarily loyal to the regime. What was of the greatest importance now was to persuade the people that in the new Europe for which Count Coudenhove is working there would be ample room for the development of a free, prosperous and powerful Germany.

He was most anxious that I should speak from the same platform with him in Paris and I agreed to do so. The meeting took place at the Théâtre Marigny on May 17th. Monsieur Ernest Mercier took the chair for us and the following is a translation of what I said on this occasion.

'It is hardly six months ago that I last had the honour to address this audience. Since then much water has flown under the bridges and I am glad to be able to say

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to-day that I regard the future with far greater confidence than I did at that time. The policy which six months ago I urged upon the Governments of France and England was to lose no time in preparing themselves to face no matter what eventuality. I said then that there was only one way to prevent war and that was by persuading the enemy that he would lose it. I said then that two steps were essential towards achieving this purpose. The first was that England and France should rally to their side the smaller nations of Europe, those smaller nations that were looking for leadership to the great Democracies, and secondly that they should endeavour to obtain the friendship of Russia.

‘That was the constructive part of my programme. At the same time I urged the abandonment of the policy of “appeasement”, which meant believing in the promises of the Dictators. My words were not then listened to and the policy of appeasement continued. Its authors were still satisfied with its results. The smaller nations, we were assured, had nothing to fear. Had not Herr Hitler promised our Prime Minister in the most formal manner that he had no further territorial ambitions in Europe? Had he not undertaken to consult Mr. Chamberlain on all those questions that could possibly lead to a conflict and did not Herr Ribbentrop, on the very day when I was speaking in Paris, give a similar guarantee to the French Government?’

‘My warnings bore no fruit either in France or in England, but fortunately I had, without knowing it, an ally far more powerful and more eloquent than myself. Herr Hitler succeeded where I and those who thought as I did had lamentably failed. Great as has been the

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work accomplished by Herr Hitler in his own country, that which he has accomplished outside has been far more impressive. The greatest of all his triumphs has been to persuade the British Government to guarantee the frontiers of eastern Europe and to introduce in peace time a system of compulsory military service. It is difficult for those who live on the continent of Europe to estimate the importance of the revolution that has taken place in British policy during the last four months. For so many centuries we English have felt completely safe from any danger, protected both by the silver sea and the guns of our Fleet. The minds of Englishmen move slowly and it has taken them a long time to understand that the invention of flying has deprived them of their most precious possession — namely their immunity from invasion. Aviation played such a small part in the last war that it was soon forgotten, and it has taken us twenty years to understand that England is now part of the continent of Europe.

‘I saw the other day in the streets of London a small crowd that had collected outside a shop window. When I went near in order to see what was attracting their attention, I saw that it was only a map of Europe on a large scale. The unusual interest that the map aroused in the minds of the group of my fellow citizens (men and women) seemed to me to have a profound political significance. I imagined that they were asking themselves for the first time “Where exactly is this Poland, whose frontiers we have guaranteed? What is the position of Roumania? and where are the northern frontiers of Greece?” That seemed to prove that the citizens of England were understanding for the first time that they

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were also citizens of Europe and that as such they were preparing to defend the rights and to carry out the duties which this new quality imposed upon them.

'Deeds are more eloquent than words. The rape of Czechoslovakia persuaded the British Government to change completely its policy where all the eloquence of all the orators of the world would have failed.

'The fact that Great Britain has now given her guarantee to three nations situated in the east of Europe is a conclusive proof of the necessity for this European unity. The time has passed for ever in which England and France could remain passive and indifferent spectators of the partition of Poland. We are no longer in the eighteenth century. To-day an attack on the integrity of a single European country is a threat to all and we, as citizens of Europe, are bound all of us to resent such an injustice and to resist it with all our force.

'Since the beginning of history there have been until recently very little changes in the rapidity of transport and international communications. For instance, some time about the year 1840 when Sir Robert Peel was obliged to leave Rome, where he was on holiday, in order to return to London as rapidly as possible owing to a political crisis, it was calculated that he travelled from Rome to London in about the same time as the journey was accomplished by Julius Caesar fifty years before Christ.

'In the last century, all methods of communication with which the world had been so long familiar became suddenly out of date. First there was steam, then electricity, then aviation. The political consequences of

these scientific inventions have been so tremendous that even now we have not properly understood their full scope. Here is a fact. I arrived in Paris on Monday morning about midday. The morning papers announced the issue of a loan of six millions of francs at 5 per cent. The whole loan was subscribed for in the early hours of the afternoon. The immediate result was a rise in the value of the franc, not only in London and throughout Europe, but also in New York, where in less than an hour the franc rose an eighth of a point, and the franc forthwith was the most popular of European currencies.

‘All this proves clearly that the world is much smaller than it was and because the world is smaller than it was the extent and span of political entities must be much greater than they were. The distance between great cities is not measured by space but by time. It is not a question of kilometres but of minutes. Our grandfathers thought themselves fortunate if they could accomplish the journey from London to Paris in less than a week. We can do it in sixty minutes. It follows from this that our two capitals are much nearer to one another than they were and for this reason it is of the first importance that our policies should coincide as closely as possible.

‘We Europeans are living now in a space that has grown so much smaller that it is only one vast city and our difficulties now are partly due to the fact that we have failed to understand all that this must mean to us in the future. .

‘One can easily imagine the difficulties that would arise if here in Paris one system of law, one code, prevailed on the right bank of the Seine and another on the left; if in one district traffic kept to the right and in

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another it kept to the left. Or if polygamy was permitted in one part of the city and strictly punished in another. Or again if there were customs duties levied on all the bridges that cross the river. Such conditions would render life impossible, would lead to the breakdown of order, hopeless complications and finally to violent conflict and bloodshed. Yet such are the very conditions in which the inhabitants of Europe are living together and unless we can change them the result finally must be war.

‘The last war, which should have taught us so much, taught us in fact very little. Twenty years ago all the nations of the world were determined that they would never again allow a world war to break out and it was on account of the strength and the sincerity of this determination that we allowed ourselves to be lulled into a false sense of security. When a man has decided definitely that he will not do a thing, he cannot believe that it is necessary to invent some complicated machinery for preventing himself from doing it. Nevertheless, such machinery was invented and was called the League of Nations. Some people mocked at it, others believed in it. The majority regarded it with goodwill but without great confidence and nobody really tried to ensure that the League should be able to work. The League failed for two reasons. First, it comprised too many members and secondly the obligations undertaken by the various states were too vague. One of the first trials which the League had to undergo showed the chink in the armour. Many of us to-day have forgotten the war of the Gran Chaco, a war between Bolivia and Paraguay, a war which continued for a long time

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and was carried on with the greatest ferocity by both sides. Both nations were members of the League of Nations, but the League did nothing about it. The belligerents were so far from Geneva that the Powers assembled there felt that the question scarcely concerned them and in fact it did not concern them. Although in theory and in fact it did not concern them, according to the principles on which the League of Nations was founded, it ought to have concerned them.

'A little later the same thing happened in a more important case — namely the attack by Japan on China. In this instance there was no question as to who had been guilty of aggression and the League of Nations condemned the conduct of Japan, but as this condemnation was not followed by any sanctions, it was worse than useless and served only to prove the impotence of the League.

'The nations then understood that the only useful action they could take was military action, but they were not prepared to sacrifice the lives of their citizens for the well being and the integrity of China.

'I do not blame those nations for not having gone to the assistance of China. They were probably right to act as they did, but I do blame them for having undertaken obligations which they were unable and unwilling to fulfil. These obligations were as numerous as they were vague. Small and definite obligations are preferable to large and vague ones. If somebody says "I will fetch you a taxi", it is probable that he will carry out his promise, but if he says "I am entirely and absolutely at your service", we can be sure that he will do nothing for you at all. In the League of Nations, all the nations

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put themselves entirely and absolutely at the service of one another but experience proved that they were not ready to lift a finger upon one another's behalf.

'The fact which is the base of international relations and which should never be forgotten is the following. No nation will ever enter upon a war unless it is convinced that its own vital interests are at stake. This is the one firm rock upon which the sea of political speculation makes no impression. It was upon this rock that the League of Nations was wrecked because those who had founded the League had forgotten its existence, but it is also on the same rock that there may be founded that which shall succeed the League and which shall surely be the salvation of Europe.

'Allow me to explain myself more fully. The policy of Munich was based on the belief that the fate of Czechoslovakia was not of sufficient importance to France and England to justify their entry into a war. Those who opposed that policy at the time did not base their opposition on any sentimental affection for Czechoslovakia but only on the belief that if we allowed such an act of aggression to succeed we should in the end ourselves become the victims of a similar act of aggression.

'Subsequent events have led our two Governments to share this opinion. Those who at first denied that collective security could ever work in practice are now doing all in their power to re-establish collective security, but on a new and firmer basis — not on a vague idealism but upon an urgent realism, on a base that will be smaller and for this very reason more solid. We shall no longer demand that the Republics of South America

shall guarantee the integrity of the Baltic States; we shall no longer insist on the common interests of Siam and Switzerland, but we shall say, and we are saying, that certain European Powers are now threatened by a common danger and that it is only by uniting together and by undertaking very definite obligations and in constructing firm alliances that we can possibly avoid that danger.

'This new league of nations will be firmly based on self interest, on an imperious necessity, on a desperate need which we share alike. The facts of the situation are compelling the nations to accept the doctrine which Count Coudenhove-Kalergi has been preaching for so long. Europe is one. To commit an act of aggression against one state in Europe is to do violence to Europe itself. If we allow aggression and breach of faith to triumph in one part of Europe it will triumph throughout. The Municipality of this great Capital in which we are could never permit a band of hooligans to dominate one quarter of the town. In the same way the supporters of order and of civilization will never allow the mind and the morality of gangsters to establish itself as the supreme power over a part of Europe.

'I do not mean by this that there is any reason to interfere in the system of government that any country has chosen for itself. If, for example, a people like the German people really love the Nazi system, heaven forbid that we should do aught to prevent them from enjoying it. In any community that is well and wisely administered each individual is allowed to manage the affairs of his own household in the way that seems best to him but he is not allowed to interfere in the affairs of

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his neighbour. It is not because Germany has adopted a totalitarian system that we are compelled to consider her as a danger but it is because she shows an ever increasing tendency to interfere in the affairs of her neighbours. It is not the Nazi philosophy which to-day constitutes the threat to the peace and order of Europe but it is the ambition — the aggressive ambition — of Germany.

‘The task, the duty, the mission of the great democracies of the West is to re-establish peace and order on the Continent. Our allies in accomplishing this task are the governments of all the small states who turn towards us both for protection and for leadership, but in addition to them our allies are also the inhabitants of every country in the world who desire and fervently long for the benefits of peace and the privilege of liberty.’

The mood of Paris in May 1939 was very different from what it had been in November 1938. Six months of sound administration at home combined with six months of insolence and aggression from the totalitarian Powers had restored self confidence and stiffened resistance. I had a long conversation with Monsieur Paul Reynaud at this time, when he explained to me what he had done and how he had been able to do it. In England we were slow to recognize what a remarkable recovery France had made in so short a time and therefore on my return to London I published an article in order to draw attention to it.

* * * *

‘No period less suitable for financial reform and reconstruction could possibly be imagined than the last six months. It has been a period of anxiety punctuated by

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acts of violence which have been calculated to shake confidence and to darken the future.

‘Nevertheless, during this very period there has taken place in France a remarkable strengthening of the internal situation, which has brought with it an increase in her international credit. The achievement is striking, and it is worth inquiring by whom and how it has been accomplished.

‘When M. Paul Reynaud assumed the office of Minister of Finance last November, he found himself faced with a situation almost comparable to that which faced those Finance Ministers such as Turgot and Necker who attempted to set matters right in the reign of Louis XVI, and who, if they had succeeded, might have averted the Revolution.

‘The difficulty of their task in the eighteenth century was largely due to the fact that political power resided with the privileged classes, to whose interest it was to retain those very abuses which were the cause of the trouble. The same difficulty faced M. Paul Reynaud. Political power to-day rests with the masses who exercise the franchise, and it had been the policy of the Popular Front Government to win the support of the masses by adopting a financial system framed on the principles of Santa Claus.

‘The new Finance Minister therefore understood that, if he was to succeed in his task, he must not be afraid of unpopularity, since every step that he would have to take must impose hardship. He has not been afraid of unpopularity, and for that very reason perhaps, he has not incurred it.

‘Writing in these columns a few weeks ago I

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denounced the heretical belief that the amount of work to be done in any country was static, and that therefore an increase in the number of workers by the admission of refugees must lead to an increase in the number of the unemployed.

'The same heresy prevailed in France under the rule of the Popular Front. There it took the form of saying, "As the amount of work is limited, if each man does less work more men will be employed". Hence the forty-hour five-day week.

'M. Reynaud, however, knew better. He pointed out that to knock one day out of the week was as unwise as it would be to destroy one machine in every factory throughout the country. It meant simply less production, and therefore less wealth. He saw also that the creation of public works which were not needed was waste of public money, and that the multiplication of civil servants was a subvention to idleness.

'He therefore set himself the uncongenial task of increasing hours of work, of diminishing public expenditure, of reducing the numbers of State employees and of raising additional taxation.

'The French Constitution enabled this work to be carried out by means of a committee empowered to pass decrees having the force of law. He was therefore delivered from two obstacles which stand in the way of democratic ministers anxious to introduce reforms. First, the delays of the legislature. Secondly, the objections of their colleagues.

'In England it takes us two months to pass the Finance Bill, and in every Cabinet each Minister is naturally the advocate of his own Department and must object to

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any economies that affect it. In France, however, the Minister of Finance, having the support of the President of the Council, is able to proceed more rapidly and more drastically than would ever be permitted to our Chancellor of the Exchequer.

'The first condition, therefore, which has made possible the remarkable success of M. Reynaud, has been the loyal and unfaltering support of his Chief, M. Daladier. Even this, however, might have proved insufficient in view of the unpopular nature of the steps that had to be taken if M. Reynaud had not possessed another and a more important asset, namely the respect of members of all parties in the Chamber.

'He is himself at present detached from any party. The Right, however, welcomed his arrival at the Ministry of Finance, knowing his financial orthodoxy. The Left welcomed his inclusion in the Government because they knew him to be a supporter of a vigorous foreign policy, and to be without any illusions as to the dangers which threatened France or as to the amount of faith that was to be placed in the promises of the Dictators. They knew also that it was through no wish of his own that he had been called upon to perform this task and that he was always ready to hand it over to anyone who thought they could do it better.

'Therefore, while the Left have regarded with dismay his stern but salutary measures, they have no wish to see him leave the Government, as they have more confidence in his statesmanship than in that of some of his colleagues.

'A Socialist deputy recently remarked to M. Reynaud, "We will make you Foreign Minister in our next Govern-

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ment". He replied with a smile, "Allow me to remain a little longer where I am, in order that your Foreign Minister may feel that the financial situation of the country is sound and solid".

'But it is not only the support of politicians, whether of the Right or of the Left, that has enabled M. Reynaud to succeed so far in the accomplishment of his task. He has had also behind him the patriotism of the French people. This immense resource has never failed him. Although the hours of work have lengthened, although the cost of living has risen, although the number of public functionaries has decreased, although the weight of taxation has grown heavier, the French people have not murmured, because they knew that their country was in danger and that sacrifices must be made by all.

'A proud and restless people, critical of incompetence, impatient of interference and resolutely opposed to the slightest indication of tyranny, the French have nevertheless been prepared throughout their history to give unlimited power to a man they can trust in a moment of danger. It is for this reason above all others that M. Reynaud has been able to make such an auspicious opening to his plan of campaign. For these last six months form only the first period of a three-year plan.

'When the cash lists for the new French loan were opened on the morning of May 15th, they had to be closed early in the afternoon. The whole sum of £34,000,000 had already been subscribed and immediately the value of the franc increased on every Exchange in Europe and America.

'Gold is already flowing back into France with as great rapidity as it was flowing away six months ago.

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While the revenue of the country is increasing, statistics prove that the amount of private savings is increasing also. Last summer, visitors were frightened away from France by the inconvenience caused through a multiplicity of strikes. On the day this article is written, there is not a single strike throughout the country.

'Once again it has been shown that the Democratic system is capable in emergency of acting rapidly, decisively and ruthlessly. Once again it has been shown that a free people will respond to strong leadership and place confidence where they are satisfied that there is also competence.

'Once again it has been shown that there is no limit to the sacrifices that a liberty-loving race will gladly offer when they are persuaded that their liberty itself is in mortal danger.'

CHAPTER X

REACTION

REVOLUTION must sooner or later produce reaction. The events of March and April had produced a violent revolution in British policy. It was not long before symptoms of reaction became manifest. Many who had silently acquiesced in the Government's new policy still hankered after the old. Some when confronted with the deterioration of international relations had the uneasy feeling that the less said about it the better. A friend once observed to me at a time of exceptionally bad unemployment 'If only they wouldn't publish the figures!' And there are many people who when presented with an unpleasant situation incline to the belief that there is a good deal to be said for the policy of the ostrich. The pacifist deplors the sound of the trumpet; the advocate of peace at any price is apt to mistake resistance for provocation. And it was thus that there gradually grew up in England in the ranks of the Prime Minister's loyalest supporters a body of opinion which would never openly disapprove of anything he said or did but which dumbly regretted the change that had come over his policy.

A semi-humorous speech by the Archbishop of Westminster, to which nobody could possibly have taken any serious objection, provided me with a text for the first article that I wrote combating the activities of those who

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I believed were working for a return to the policy of appeasement and acquiescence.

* * * *

'The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, addressing the Catholic Truth Society last week, expressed the view that if it were possible to muzzle the world for a month the result would prove beneficial to the cause of peace. Many a weary heart and many a deafened brain must have welcomed the suggestion.

'The muzzle, the Cardinal explained, would apply to the written as well as to the spoken word. Newspapers would cease to appear, cinemas would be closed down and upon all "wild statesmen and orators" the ban of silence would be imposed.

'Writing as one who has frequently been criticized for speaking too often and too plainly, I can say truthfully that nobody would enjoy a holiday more. No newspapers to read in the morning, no debates to listen to in the afternoon, no speeches to endure after dinner — it sounds an idyllic existence. Where there was no argument, it may be held, there could be no strife. As the word so often precedes the blow you have only to forbid the former in order to eliminate the latter.

'But is it as simple as that? With all due respect to His Eminence and with all sincere sympathy with his desire for quietness, can we be confident that peace and quiet — words so frequently associated — are in truth natural concomitants?

'When the first pleasant surprise of finding no newspapers awaiting us in the morning had worn off, would tranquillity ensue or would the old anxieties return? Should we be able to banish from our minds the

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haunting visions of scheming statesmen, of marching armies and of men-of-war at sea? And even if we were successful in banishing the thought should we be able to alter the reality?

'The Cardinal, of course, spoke half in jest, but he did express in an exaggerated form what many feel — namely that the utterances of politicians and publicists do more harm than good, that everything that is said demands an answer and the answer is never the final word, that argument leads to anger and that anger may lead to war.

'The distressing history of the last few years may seem to confirm this view, but surely it is not so much the quantity as the quality of what has been said that is at fault.

'It would indeed be a melancholy conclusion to arrive at that speech — one of the few gifts that distinguish us from the other creatures — had in the long run done us more harm than good; and the mention of those other creatures should remind us that lacking this peculiarity does not seem to have afforded them great benefit.

'There are no speeches made in the jungle, neither is there any peace there. Its inhabitants live in hourly terror. The majority of such pleasures as they enjoy are derived from the cruelty and suffering they inflict on others. If it be true that our remote ancestors lived there, nobody has any wish to return. It has taken us many centuries to reach our present level, and if the gift of speech, like all other gifts, is often abused, it has undoubtedly served our needs and may yet prove our salvation.

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'The most profound mistake that we make in our approach to the problem of world peace is to imagine that peace is the natural state of man and that it is only his folly or his wickedness which has produced war. The contrary is the fact.

'Man in the primitive state thinks only of himself, his mate and his young — all other creatures are enemies to be feared and destroyed. Man in a slightly higher state of development thinks only of his tribe. Those who are members of it are his allies. All other tribes are to be feared and destroyed.

'In the last few thousand years — a very short period in Man's history but the only one of which we have written record — man has been endeavouring, with varying success, to scramble up one stage higher. A few enlightened leaders of thought have realized at different periods in these two or three thousand years that it is unnecessary for the various tribes to quarrel, that the plenteous earth can provide abundance for all, and that strife is an evil heritage from a baser origin. So tribes have combined and made nations and nations have combined and made empires, and empires have sought to be universal in order that peace might prevail. All these efforts owe such measure of success as they have obtained to the gift of speech, which has enabled the sane and the wise to impress their views upon the mad and foolish.

'Unfortunately the process has not been continuous. As to the houses which children build with cards, there seems to be a limit imposed upon the height of civilization. What manner of men the Sumerians were we can hardly guess, and we know all too little of the

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Egyptians. But we do know that the Greeks, 400 years before the birth of Christ, had reached a level in art, literature and philosophy that was not recaptured, if it ever has been, for 2000 years.

'We know that in the latter days of the Roman Empire, Europe was for a century or more, enjoying a greater measure of peace than she has ever enjoyed since. Yet each one of these efforts was doomed to ultimate frustration.

'The reason is not far to seek. No cataclysm of nature was responsible; it has always been man himself who has destroyed the works of man. He has not done it by foolish words but by forcible action.

'The artistic and talkative Athenians might have survived if it had not been for the silent but militaristic and efficient inhabitants of Sparta. The peace of the Roman Empire was destroyed by the armed hordes who swept down upon it from beyond the Rhine and the Danube.

'Already the muzzle which His Eminence hankers after has been all too liberally applied to the inhabitants of the world we live in. There are few countries in Europe where free speech is permitted. We have seen a regime inaugurated by the public burning of books and since then not only has no free thought but no romance nor poetry found expression for fear of offending the rules of orthodoxy.

'So, although there are moments when we long for silence and look with sympathy at the forty volumes in which Carlyle praised the virtue of holding one's tongue, in the long run we must all realize that freedom of speech remains one of the most precious, but not one of

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the most secure, portions of our heritage and we must echo the words which Tennyson wrote when in his day the Press was rebuked for the disrespect with which they had referred to Napoleon III.

‘“As long as we remain, we must speak free,
Though all the storm of Europe on us break,
No petty German State are we.
But the one voice in Europe: we must speak
That if to-night our greatness were struck dead,
There might be left some record of the things we
said.”’

Shortly after the campaign in favour of a return to appeasement assumed more alarming dimensions, and it was focused in a letter by Lord Rushcliffe to *The Times* which appeared on May 3rd. I wrote an answer which was published on the following morning. I followed the letter up by an article which appeared on May 9th, under the title of ‘Grasp the Nettle’:

‘During the last three weeks a revolution has taken place in the foreign policy of Great Britain, to which there is no parallel in our long history.

‘Great Britain has become part of the continent of Europe. We may regret the fact, but we must face it. The invention of flying has brought the danger of war to our own doorsteps. For seven centuries no hostile force has landed on this island. War has meant for the majority of the inhabitants turning out to cheer the troops when they marched away, and welcoming them on their return. To-day war means, for those who are not engaged in the conduct of it, the necessity of immediately taking cover.

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'This fact, and others, have rendered it necessary to adopt a European foreign policy, to form alliances and to give guarantees. The good faith of Britain is bound up now with the frontiers not only of France but also of Poland, of Greece and of Roumania. It is not proposed here to defend that policy, and for two reasons. First, it is the very policy which I advocated in these columns six months ago. Secondly, it has been accepted by the House of Commons without a single dissentient voice.

'Such unanimous approval of so startling and radical a change of policy is deeply impressive. The country, represented by the Commons, is committed, and it is important that the country should fully understand the extent of the commitment. If the vital interest of any of the countries mentioned is attacked, Great Britain is pledged to go to war in order to assist them.

'It is a dangerous policy, but in the world to-day, there is no royal road to safety. The only alternative is to stand alone, to watch the successive defeats of all who might have been our friends, and to await our turn at the end of the programme.

'Because it is a dangerous policy it must be pursued with resolution. Rose leaves can be toyed with, nettles must be firmly grasped. There has been much delay in adopting the policy, and the result of that delay has been to arouse suspicion as to the extent of our sincerity in its adoption. Unless that suspicion is allayed the whole purpose of our policy may be frustrated.

'We are attempting to form a team of nations for the preservation of the peace of the world. Great Britain must be the captain of that team, but if the members of the team have any doubt of the steadfast determination

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of their captain they will begin one by one to fall away and the team will straggle into destruction.

'The decision to adopt the principle of compulsory service has gone far to carry conviction. No better proof could have been given that we had seriously embraced the new policy than the abandonment of the old voluntary principle to which we have so long been faithful. I was in Paris when the announcement was made, and throughout France it was received like the news of a victory.

'The refusal of the Labour Party to support it is unfortunate, but it could probably be overcome if the Labour Party did not share to some extent the suspicions that are entertained abroad as to the sincerity of the Government's conversion.

'It is indeed regrettable that in these circumstances colour should have been lent to such suspicions by friends and supporters of the Government. Before the Military Service Bill has become law a campaign has been started for making further concessions to those heads of States who have repeatedly violated the laws of nations and shocked the conscience of the world, and who in three years have, by force, extinguished the independence of four countries.

'The campaign was opened by a letter to *The Times* from Lord Rushcliffe, formerly a Cabinet Minister and still one of the highest paid officials under the Crown. He wrote, of course, in a purely private capacity, but foreigners find it difficult to understand that the chairman of the Unemployment Assistance Board, who is appointed by the Government and can be dismissed by them, can make an important suggestion concerning

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foreign policy without having received any encouragement from the Government to do so. We may deplore the ignorance of foreigners in this respect, but it is a pardonable error.

‘Lord Rushcliffe thinks it should be possible to meet the claims of Italy in the Mediterranean, but is not quite certain what those claims may be. The French have no doubt upon the matter.

‘“Corsica! — Tunis! — Nice!”

‘Lord Rushcliffe would dismiss that cry as “the irresponsible demands of a section — probably a small section — of the Italian populace”. But does he really believe that any section of the Italian populace would dare to express an opinion that had not previously received approval from above? And has he forgotten that it was not the populace but the members of what corresponds in the Italian constitution to the British House of Commons who unanimously raised that cry?

‘If those members are not — as it may indeed be held that they are not — the true representatives of the people, then they are, of necessity, the nominees of the Dictator, and it is significant that the Dictator, while he has not endorsed, has never repudiated these claims.

‘The campaign in favour of concession so unhappily opened was carried further the following day by a leading article also in *The Times* when the unfortunate slogan was promulgated, “Danzig is not worth a war”. No more direct incitement to Herr Hitler to march his troops into the City could possibly have been given.

‘Once again those tiresome foreigners are under a false impression of which it is impossible to rid them. They believe that *The Times* is a semi-official newspaper

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and that the views put forward in its leading articles are the views that the Government desires to be put forward. They were encouraged in this erroneous belief by the fact that *The Times* was the first and only newspaper in England to advocate the cession of the Sudeten territories to Germany, and although that policy was denounced by the Foreign Office at the time it was eventually adopted.

'No official denial has followed the plea for the abandonment of Danzig and if anxiety is felt in Poland we can hardly be surprised. The Poles are really the best judges of the value of Danzig. The cry "Dover is not worth a war" would probably carry conviction to the heart of every Pole, but it would meet with little approval from Englishmen.

'But Danzig is more important to Poland than Dover to England because it is situated at the mouth of the Vistula down which a great part of the trade of Poland must flow. The conqueror of Danzig would very soon be the dictator of Poland and that unhappy country which the Great War rescued from a century of bondage would relapse once more into servitude.

'Danzig is not worth a war — no indeed, nor was Abyssinia, nor was Austria, nor was Czechoslovakia, nor was Memel, nor was Albania. But where is the end? There is a story in the *Arabian Nights* of an oriental potentate — pacific and philosophical — who when they told him that the enemy had conquered his distant provinces replied "Enough remains".

'The enemy, however, was not satisfied and the war was carried into the heart of the kingdom. Whenever a new loss was announced the King calmly replied

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"Enough remains". But at last they reached the walls of the capital and laid them low and they took that king and cut off his head.

' "Then", comments the chronicler, "enough did not remain". '

The following week I contributed an article on the subject of the visit of the King and Queen to Canada and the United States — a non-controversial theme, and a pleasant change from those with which I usually dealt.

* * * *

'I was recently asked by one of those profound students of world affairs who read only between the lines of newspapers and attach deep and hidden meanings to the most unpremeditated actions of the great, what was the true political significance of the visit which our King and Queen are paying to the United States of America. I replied that in my opinion it had no particular political significance but was merely the natural and fortunate outcome of a series of events.

'It was important that the King should visit Canada. Since the passing of the Statute of Westminster the King has been the sole link which holds together the British Commonwealth of Nations. This fact is not always fully appreciated even at home, and is seldom understood or believed in foreign countries.

'The Government of Canada is in exactly the same position with regard to the King as the Government of Great Britain. The Parliament that sits at Ottawa is as free and unfettered in all its actions as the Parliament that sits at Westminster. The Cabinet who meet in Downing Street have no control whatever over any of the self-governing Dominions, whose High Commis-

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sioners are their Ambassadors, and the British Secretary of State for the Dominions has functions analogous to those of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

'The King is, therefore, under a far greater obligation to visit his Dominions than were any of his predecessors, and it is to be hoped that in the long and happy reign which we all wish him, each one of the Dominions will enjoy the privilege of a Royal visit.

'Since, therefore, it was necessary for him to go to Canada it was very obviously desirable that he should extend his journey to the United States, for to visit the continent of North America without seeing anything of the United States would indeed be as though a man were to go to a performance of *Hamlet* and to withdraw from the auditorium whenever the Prince of Denmark was on the stage.

'Which of us having crossed the Atlantic Ocean would willingly forego a glimpse of New York, which is certainly one of the major wonders of the modern world. The King and Queen undoubtedly share the curiosity which their humblest subjects would experience in similar circumstances and would have been equally disappointed if any cause had prevented that curiosity from being gratified.

'The people of Great Britain, reluctant as they were to be parted from the Head of the State even temporarily in these anxious times, are glad for many reasons that the King and Queen should pay this visit to the New World. In the first place they do not grudge a holiday to one whose responsibilities are never ending and whose term of office is a life sentence. Nor could any holiday be better chosen for a man who was a sailor before he

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was a king — than one that will be spent so largely on the sea.

‘They are glad that the King should see America, and they are equally glad that America should see the King. We are very proud of Their Majesties, and we have no doubt whatever of the impression they will produce upon the open-minded, warm-hearted people of the United States. There is indeed in the minds of many Americans a deeply ingrained distrust of Royalty, born of an ancient grudge, handed down by tradition and nourished by doctrines that have been firmly held for a century and a half.

‘But George VI is not George III, and we are anxious that Americans should see the difference. It is true that our King is descended in the fifth generation from that well meaning if meddlesome monarch, but even the stern vengeance of the Old Testament did not extend beyond the third and fourth generations.

‘Therefore we may surely take it for granted that no recollection of some of the least glorious pages in English history will interfere with the welcome which Their Majesties will receive, and that the ancient grudge has been as completely forgotten in New York as it has in London, where the statue of George Washington stands within sight of that of George III and under the shadow of Nelson’s monument.

‘On the other hand we do not expect Americans to subscribe to the sentiment which Shakespeare put into the mouth of one of his worst monarchs:

“‘There’s such divinity doth hedge a king
That treason can but peep to what it would.”

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'The Americans are unrepentant republicans. Their constitution has served them well and they have had no reason to regret it. They will not be dazzled by the glamour of Royalty. They will judge our King and Queen upon their merits. Confident of the verdict, that is all that we demand.

'We are glad, also, that at a period when the world is full of fearful rumours they should not have been allowed to interfere with the Royal time-table, and that the King and Queen have refused to postpone their visit which was arranged so long ago and which has been looked forward to so eagerly.

'It is a proof of Britain's determination to continue hoping for the best, and of her confidence in her sea power if the worst should eventuate.

'Yet another feature of this auspicious visit is a source of satisfaction to the people of Great Britain. The King will have an opportunity of getting to know the President. Heads of States have in the past been little but names, and not always even names to the citizens of other nations.

'Even to-day the ordinary Englishman would hesitate to name the King or President of half a dozen foreign countries, but there is not one home in a million where the name of President Roosevelt is not a household word. The radio has brought him to countless firesides and he is certainly the first President of the United States whose voice has been familiar to Englishmen. In that voice they have heard expression given to sentiments which they recognized as their own, and they have rejoiced at the vision and courage which inspired the speaker.

'As they listened to him the waters of the broad

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Atlantic seemed to dwindle and they understood that distance cannot divide nations who share a common faith. At such moments who has not wished that all remaining causes of misunderstanding might be removed? Who has not thought how fine a gesture it would be if when the King says good-bye to the President he could leave with him an envelope which on being opened would be found to contain a cheque for the whole balance of that unhappy debt.

‘But such deeds belong to the realms of romance rather than to the world of realities. The real importance of the King’s visit is the opportunity it provides — not for paying debts, for making treaties or for spreading propaganda, but for the Heads of two great peoples, who have so much in common, to shake hands with one another and have a talk.’

Throughout the various stages of the Czechoslovakian tragedy I had felt that many Englishmen — from the man in the street to the man in the Cabinet — were forming a false estimate of the issue by asking themselves the questions ‘What is Czechoslovakia to us? How can the survival or disappearance of a republic in Central Europe affect the welfare of the British Empire?’ Equally mistaken, so it seemed to me, had been those who based their support of a more determined policy upon our obligations under the Covenant of the League or upon the moral duty of defending the weak against unprovoked aggression by the strong. The maintenance of Czechoslovakia was, I believed, a British interest, the loss of it a British defeat. A strong place upon our frontier had fallen. The loss could only be made good by redoubling our preparations for defence.

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I feared that the same mistake might be made with regard to Poland, and when the phrase 'Danzig is not worth a war' became current in London I noticed that simultaneously a French journalist raised the cry in Paris 'Why die for Danzig?' I wrote therefore an article in which I tried to state in the very short space at my disposal what the situation with regard to Danzig really was.

* * * *

'The fierce searchlight of the world's attention has been suddenly switched on to the ancient city of Danzig.

'Danzig is a city with a long history, and bears the record of it written plain in a number of beautiful and well-preserved churches, public buildings and private dwellings. Until the middle of the fifteenth century it was one of the four principal towns that formed the Hanseatic League, an association of independent commercial towns bound together for the purpose of furthering their mutual interests. When the League decayed, Danzig became voluntarily part of the kingdom of Poland, and remained so for 300 years.

'The most cynical crime committed in the eighteenth century was the partition of Poland. This long-established kingdom, comprising within its borders a people of one race, of one language and of one faith, was gradually carved up by its more powerful neighbours, Russia, Austria and Prussia, until not an acre of it remained. There was no war nor defeat in battle, but overwhelming pressure was brought to bear. Over a period of years a series of partition treaties were concluded, to the first of which Poland unwillingly consented and the last of which she was unable to resist.

'The past history of Poland is pregnant with warning

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for the present time. She was fatally hampered in her dealings with the three autocracies — or dictator Powers — by possessing first an aristocratic and later a democratic constitution. She hoped by concessions to appease the greed of her enemies. She learnt too late that this policy proved in practice as futile as would be the attempt to keep a man-eating tiger at bay by proffering a series of ham sandwiches.

‘When all was lost by the last partition in 1796, hundreds of thousands of Poles left their country rather than accept alien domination, and Napoleon seized the opportunity to avail himself of such valuable fighting material. Out of these refugees he formed the Polish legions, which were distinguished even in the Grand Army for their gallantry and military prowess, and one of the most disastrous political mistakes in Napoleon’s career was his failure to seize the occasion when it occurred of restoring the Kingdom of Poland.

‘When Poland was restored after the Great War the future of Danzig presented a problem. In the town itself the population was mainly German. In the surrounding district the population was overwhelmingly Polish. That surrounding district ran up like the two sides of a triangle to Danzig, which served as its northern apex. Both the western and the eastern sides of that triangle were flanked by German populations, and therefore as the triangle grew ever narrower towards its apex it finally formed what has come to be known as the Polish Corridor.

‘If Poland hoped to survive economically it was essential that she should have a port on the Baltic. At the time of the Treaty of Versailles there was no

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other port than Danzig available. Therefore Danzig was created a free city with a democratic constitution under the control of a High Commissioner appointed by the League of Nations. The system worked satisfactorily until the coming of the Nazi regime which has so successfully upset everything in Europe.

'The Nazis succeeded in obtaining a two-thirds majority in the Danzig Senate which enabled them to alter the constitution to their will. The internal administration of the city is already under Nazi control. The President of the Senate is the real ruler. He is Herr Greiser, an enthusiastic Nazi who distinguished himself once at Geneva by cocking a snook at the Council of the League.

'The High Commissioner of the League, Herr Burckhardt, a distinguished Swiss historian, refers to himself humorously as the ghost of Geneva, who haunts but can no longer alarm those who have usurped his functions. It is to the credit of the two men that they remain the best of friends, and I have enjoyed a delightful evening's duck shooting in the company of both of them and entertained them together on board H.M.S. *Enchantress*.

'While the Germans have been asserting themselves in Danzig the Poles have not been idle. They were quick to perceive the new danger that threatened them and they prepared to meet it. Danzig, by the terms of the Treaty, must not be fortified and therefore could not serve as a naval base to either Germans or Poles. To meet the difficulty the Poles have succeeded by an effort which is little less than miraculous in transforming within a period of less than ten years a small fishing village into a great port.

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'Nine years ago the population of Gdynia was less than 400; to-day it is more than 100,000. Here lies the Polish Navy, including two of the most modern destroyers completed for Poland in Great Britain two years ago and appropriately named *Thunder* and *Lightning*. Here also is a new base for Poland's commerce, much of which has migrated hither from Danzig, together with a large part of the Polish population, so that the German preponderance in that city has been further increased.

'As, therefore, the Germans have control of Danzig and as the Poles have a port at Gdynia what, it may well be asked, is the trouble about? The answer is that there need *be* no trouble and that the Poles certainly do not want any. They have acquiesced in the situation at Danzig although it is very different from what was contemplated by the Powers at Geneva. The Germans are no more oppressed in Danzig than they are in Berlin.

'The Poles, however, are still interested in Danzig from two points of view. First they must retain their commercial privileges there, for despite the rise of Gdynia there is still one advantage which belongs to Danzig and which Gdynia can never possess. Danzig is situated at the mouth of the Vistula — that great river which runs through Poland and whose waters provide cheap transport from the interior of the country to the sea. Germany professes willingness to guarantee Polish rights in this respect, but German guarantees have recently lost something of their value, and the bravest man may be pardoned a moment's hesitation before putting his head into the lion's mouth however unexceptional the guarantee.

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'Much more important, however, than the commercial is the strategic aspect. To put it bluntly — if Germany be allowed to fortify Danzig and make of it a naval base Poland will lie at the mercy of Germany. There was little hope for the survival of Czechoslovakia when the Sudeten territories which comprised the defensive frontier of Bohemia were lost. There would be no hope for the survival of Poland with the German army and navy established at Danzig. The laboriously constructed port of Gdynia, representing such a vast expenditure of labour, of talent and of wealth, situated as it is but a few miles from Danzig, could be blown to smithereens by the vastly superior naval resources of Germany.

'A great power in undisputed possession of Danzig holds a noose round the neck of Poland. The Poles know it. After a century of subjection they have experienced twenty years of freedom. They will fight and perish rather than submit to another period of servitude. It is impossible to believe that if they were faced with these dire alternatives they would be left to fight alone.'

A similar intention animated another article that I wrote a little later, namely the wish to make plain to the public the meaning of our new foreign policy — the causes and the result of it. There was bound to be great reluctance amongst the large liberal-minded section of the community at parting with the League of Nations from which they had hoped so much. I thought therefore that if the new policy could be presented to them as the formation of another and more practical league it might prove easier of acceptance.

* * *

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'Englishmen, with their healthy distaste for logic, are always reluctant to accept finality. They maintain forms and ceremonies that have lost their meaning and do homage to empty shrines in which they have ceased to believe.

'And so because a large number of Englishmen embraced the ideals of the League of Nations with enthusiasm, and because the vast majority of Englishmen regarded the League with mild approval, they will doubtless be shocked to read the blunt statement that the League is as dead as mutton. They will protest that this is an exaggeration. They will point out that Lord Halifax was recently at Geneva, that the League's High Commissioner has returned to Danzig and that the activities of the League of Nations Union continue unabated.

'All this is true and it may well be that the League will continue to perform useful services of a social, educational or scientific character, but in so far as it was designed to prevent war and to settle international disputes it has failed completely, and the sooner we recognize the fact the better. If we recognize the fact we may discover the cause of it, and if we discover the cause we may avoid a repetition of the error.

'The first symptom of a disease that finally proves fatal is frequently so slight as to pass unnoticed. The first symptom of the malady that killed the League was the war of the Gran Chaco, the very name of which most people have already forgotten. This war between Bolivia and Paraguay, carried on in the centre of South America, aroused little interest in Europe, and the

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League, beyond making inquiries and issuing reports, did very little to check it.

'The next intimation that something was wrong with the League followed — Japan's interference with China. Much greater interest was aroused. Many European countries have interests in China. None have greater interests than Great Britain. The League was deeply stirred, and on this occasion went so far as to condemn the aggressor. But once again nothing was done about it, and the aggressor could afford to laugh at the condemnation.

'Then followed the invasion of Abyssinia. For the first time a European Power was directly concerned. The feelings of Europe were roused. There was considerable indignation, and it was felt by many that the supreme test for the League of Nations had arrived.

'The League reacted more violently than ever before, and went so far as to apply economic sanctions against Italy. The sanctions failed, the League was defeated, and from thenceforward its days were numbered. The death certificate was provided by the events of last September, when during the gravest international crisis that has arisen since 1914 it was never even suggested that the League of Nations should be consulted, although Czechoslovakia was a prominent and active member, and although the League Assembly was actually sitting at the time.

'In the three instances given the cause of failure was always the same — namely the reluctance of the Governments forming the League to being drawn into war. Nor were the Governments solely to blame. In a democratic country it is the duty of Governments to

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carry out the will of the people. The principles of the League of Nations had more popular support in this country than in any other, but it would be idle to pretend that even in this country a majority of the people would have welcomed, or even willingly accepted, war on behalf of Bolivia or Paraguay, of China, or of Abyssinia.

‘What lesson is to be drawn from these events? It is that no democratic country will ever go to war unless the people are convinced that their own vital interests are affected. Modern war is such a fearful thing — so utterly different in scope and character from the wars of the nineteenth century — that no Government would be justified in inflicting the horrors of it upon their people for a lesser cause.

‘A man may sacrifice himself for an ideal, but a Government has no right to ask a man to make such a sacrifice. Self-interest remains the basic motive in international relations. We may deplore the fact but we must not ignore it. To ignore it is to court disaster. Nor will self-interest — if it be enlightened — prove a bad guide to peace and security.

‘The League failed because it forgot that no nation would fight save for its own interests. The League failed, and because of its failure the international situation has rapidly deteriorated. The League failed, and since its failure the nations of Europe have gone in fear and trembling, as would the law-abiding citizens of a community where the police system had broken down.

‘I remember once when I was speaking in support of the League of Nations Union being asked by a member of the audience whether I really *believed* in the League of

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Nations. I replied that you might just as well ask a man whether he believed in the Fire Brigade. The League of Nations was not a religion or a philosophy which a man may believe in or reject, it was a piece of political machinery designed for the prevention of war.

'I hoped that it might achieve its purpose. I never felt confident that it would. For the time being it formed the basis of our foreign policy. If it collapsed we should have to form a new policy and I believed that we should have to form a new league.

'Now that is precisely what has happened. Six months ago I wrote in these columns an article entitled "Wanted — A Foreign Policy", in which I ventured to point out that at that moment we were without one. The League had gone and there had gone with it the doctrine of collective security. Nothing had come to take their place. There was a void which needed filling.

'The events of March and April made plain the presence of the void and the urgent need of filling it. It has been filled with commendable rapidity. Where there was nothing three months ago there are already Poland, Greece, Roumania and Turkey, and Russia is looming into sight. All these countries are bound to us and we to them. It is a new league and it is formed on the secure basis of self-interest.

'Those of us who believed that it was wrong to allow German forces to destroy Czechoslovakian independence were actuated not solely by devotion to the abstract principle of justice or by sympathy for the Czech people, but also by the belief that it was a menace to British security.

'That it has proved such a menace is now generally

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recognized, and we have not guaranteed Poland and Roumania and Greece because we love the Poles, the Roumanians and the Greeks any better than we love the Abyssinians, the Czechs and the Albanians, but because we have understood, and the other nations have understood also, that our vital interests are bound together, and that acts of aggression against one constitute a threat to all.

‘Our obligations in this new league are no longer limitless and vague, but definite and binding. We know exactly what we have to do and in what circumstances we have to do it. We have learnt from failure. We have formed a new club on a smaller basis but with stricter rules.

‘The membership is at present limited, but it is not exclusive. Perhaps the day may come — and we all hope it will — when those very nations whose acts of aggression have caused the formation of the club will themselves apply for membership. We shall closely scrutinize their credentials, but if we are satisfied of their sincere intention to observe the rules and to prove desirable members we shall not refuse them admittance.’

That section of the Prime Minister’s supporters to whom reference has already been made and who accepted his new policy with silent reluctance found the proposed co-operation with the Soviet Government the most difficult item to swallow. They were silent on the floor of the House but in the lobbies they were vocal and as they continued to denounce the machinations of the Bolshevists it is not surprising that many who ardently supported the new policy and were anxious to see it crowned with success began to entertain suspicions

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of the sincerity with which it was being pursued when prolonged delays attended the negotiations with Russia.

It was in this mood that I wrote an article on the subject to which my editor gave the title 'Be Bold in the Baltic'.

'The epoch-making decisions taken by the Government in the last few months — such as the undertaking of military commitments in eastern Europe and the introduction of compulsory service in Great Britain — have been received with a unanimity of approval that is truly remarkable. The opinion is widely held that revolutionary as these measures have been, and unthinkable as they would have appeared even a year ago, they have nevertheless been wise and necessary.

'If therefore Ministers are still subject to criticism it is not on account of what they have done or are now doing but rather because of the way in which they do it. The belief exists, although it is doubtless erroneous, that the Government are pursuing a policy which is not of their choosing, but one that has been forced upon them by events and which they have therefore adopted without enthusiasm. Unwarranted as such suspicion may be Ministers have only themselves to thank for it, and it is only they who can by unmistakable language and vigorous action recapture the confidence which they are in danger of losing.

'That grounds for such suspicion exist is undeniable. It cannot be forgotten that on March 15th when Mr. Eden suggested in the House of Commons that we should make arrangements with other nations who were like minded with ourselves to stand together in the cause of peace the suggestion was very firmly rejected by the

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Government spokesman, who on that occasion was the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

‘He regarded with horror a proposal that would, as he phrased it, make our foreign policy dependent “upon a whole lot of foreign countries”. His speech was loudly applauded by a majority of Government supporters who within a few days found themselves committed to defend the frontiers of Poland, Greece and Roumania.

‘Equally sudden and unforeseen was the decision to adopt compulsory service. Here again the language held by Ministers themselves increased the difficulty. There was certainly no need for the Prime Minister to repeat after Munich the undertaking not to introduce compulsory service in peace time, and it was still more to be regretted that in a public speech shortly before Christmas he should have denounced conscription as undemocratic and contrary to the traditions of this country. Such language increased his own difficulties and provided his enemies with ammunition.

‘When in April certain Members of Parliament, myself amongst them, put down a motion urging the Government to introduce compulsory service, it was therefore hardly surprising that a number of Government supporters considered that they would be loyally serving their masters by tabling an amendment in the opposite sense, congratulating the Government on their resistance to the demand for conscription and expressing the confident hope that no such measure would be introduced until the opinion of the country had been taken at a General Election.

‘These devoted adherents had a rude awakening when, while the ink of their amendment was hardly dry,

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they found themselves faced by a full-blooded conscription policy. It must, however, be recorded as a tribute to their loyalty that they voted without hesitation or explanation in favour of the policy they had condemned.

'Last week the Bill for the setting up of a Ministry of Supply was introduced. Mr. Burgin with commendable candour reminded members that the policy which was then being adopted had been recommended to the House of Commons by Mr. Winston Churchill over three years ago. Mr. Churchill had foreseen even the minor details of the administrative plan, and had suggested the name of the very Civil Servant who has finally been selected to fill the principal post under the Minister.

'Members were reminded of a recent gibe of Mr. Campbell Stephen¹ — that the Prime Minister having adopted the policy of Mr. Churchill ought really to allow Mr. Churchill to take his place. Nor could it be forgotten that at the opening of the present Session so emphatic was the Government's refusal to set up a Ministry of Supply that a three-lined Whip was issued to their supporters to reject it.

'In view of these facts it cannot be a cause for wonder if suspicion exists as to the enthusiasm with which the Government have adopted and are pursuing their present policy. Such suspicion has unfortunately been increased by the prolonged delay which attends the conclusion of an agreement with Russia. Nobody wishes to intervene while negotiations are in progress; but these particular negotiations have been subjected to such a

¹ In the article as originally published I attributed this remark to Mr. Maxton. It is now restored with apologies to its real author.

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degree of publicity that it can hardly be considered indiscreet to express an opinion with regard to them.

‘It appears that the Baltic States constitute the difficulty. These States form the frontier of Russia. If they are attacked the integrity of Russia is in danger, and Russia wishes to be assured that her allies will come to her assistance. The Baltic States — like rabbits in the presence of a boa constrictor who has promised not to eat them — assure us in rather shaky voices that they feel quite safe and do not desire to be given any guarantee. The Prime Minister asserts that it is obviously impossible to guarantee a state against its will. Such an assertion sounds at first convincing, but does it bear closer examination?

‘These states are to Russia what Belgium is to Great Britain, but Russia lacks the additional security of the English Channel. If a Belgian Government were to declare that they no longer required the guarantee of France and England — a not impossible contingency — would such a declaration alter in any way the fact that this country would still go to war in order to prevent Belgium falling into the hands of a great hostile Power? Of course it would not. The guarantee would remain whether Belgium wanted it or not.

‘Let us be realistic and face facts. We guarantee the frontiers of a country not out of love for its inhabitants but out of consideration of our own security. If Russia considers that the integrity of the Baltic States is essential to her security we cannot blame her, and if we are asking her to undertake to assist us in the case of emergency we cannot refuse to give her a reciprocal undertaking.

‘While talk is proceeding time is flying. Sinister reports

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are current of German activities. In the violent and abusive speeches which Herr Hitler has recently been making there is never one word of criticism for the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, and the name of Stalin is treated with greater respect than the name of Chamberlain. There are in the air potentialities of immeasurable disaster.

'Too often in the past the Government have hesitated, and subsequently made up for hesitation by hurried action. On this occasion, however, there could be no such retrieval. If we hesitate this time we shall be lost.'

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It was in the early summer of this year that the German Government began to raise the scare of encirclement. It was an adroit move, for there were many Germans who had witnessed the rape of Czechoslovakia without enthusiasm and were now beginning to note the consequences with alarm. To convert the Germans, if only in their own eyes, from the aggressors to the aggrieved, to persuade them that they were the victims of a sinister international plot and that they, a peace-loving and inoffensive people, were surrounded by blood-thirsty, war-mongering enemies was the task to which the ingenious Dr. Goebbels and his propaganda department now devoted their energies.

To the charge that we were endeavouring to encircle Germany the first British reaction was to deny it. But as it certainly was our policy to form political understandings with most of the countries bordering on the Reich, it seemed to me that a mere denial might fail to carry conviction and that it would be certainly more politic and perhaps more truthful to explain exactly what the policy was which we were now pursuing and the reasons which had led to its adoption. I attempted to put the case in the form of a fable, a form that did not find favour in the eyes of the editor of the *Evening Standard*, so that for one week no article of mine appeared:

* * * *

'Once upon a time there lived in one of the Fortunate

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Islands a happy and highly civilized community. They had abolished war, they had even abandoned blood sports for all the animals were domesticated and all the human beings were friends. Their labours were devoted to cultivating the soil and to studying the arts and sciences, their leisure was spent in singing and dancing and going to the play.

'In the middle of this island however there lived a leopard. The humane and enlightened inhabitants were sure there was no harm in him. There were certain incidents in his past, they admitted, which had better be forgotten, but they were confident that he had undergone a complete change of heart and he would, like everybody else, respond to kindness. A few people there were who from time to time drew attention to the fact that while he might have changed his heart he certainly had not changed his spots, but such people were generally condemned for harbouring unworthy suspicions. They were called Warmongers and Jitterbugs and held up to universal opprobrium.

'After a time however it began to be noticed that the increased kindness which was shown to the leopard did not produce exactly the desired effects. Every time that something was given to him although he would say that he was completely satisfied he would return on the following day and ask for more. It was also noticed that although, as a result of one of those unfortunate incidents in his past, his teeth had been drawn and his claws had been cut, he had from somewhere acquired a new set of the former, and that the latter had grown again and that he spent the greater part of his time in rendering them as sharp as possible.

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'The humane and enlightened people said that he meant no harm by it. That he had been suffering from an inferiority complex which was only natural in a leopard who had lost his teeth and his claws, that he wanted them only for the sake of appearances, and that anyhow it would be impossible to prevent him from having them unless one was prepared to be rough. At the same time however they showed that they were not quite as confident as they pretended because they began to look up some old clubs and cudgels which they had long ago consigned to the lumber room.

'The Warmongers and Jitterbugs went on muttering about those spots which the leopard hadn't changed. They suggested that an animal that bore those spots should never be trusted with teeth and claws. And they were quite rude about the clubs and cudgels which they derided as inadequate weapons for dealing with wild beasts.

'Hard by the lair of the leopard there lay a delightful garden inhabited by some easy-going people who were very fond of singing and dancing and going to the play. Some of these people were alarmed by the leopard who was always prowling round the walls of the garden and making very unpleasant noises which did not seem calculated to create confidence. But others maintained that he was a good and friendly leopard and was just the animal they needed in the garden in order to make life more serious and to increase their prestige. Some of these even dressed up in leopard skins in order to be as like the leopard as possible. But they were never the real thing.

'Suddenly one fine morning the leopard jumped over

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the garden wall. His friends were naturally very pleased to see him but they were a little surprised when he said that the garden was his. He walked round the garden asking everyone he met whether they did not agree that the garden belonged to him, and as his face wore a very unpleasant expression when he put the question everyone said that there was no doubt about it at all.

'Then those who had not liked the leopard in the past began to disappear with surprising rapidity. But nobody asked where they had gone. And those who had liked him in the past began to wear thoughtful expressions and to say very little. They gave up singing and dancing and no more plays were produced because the leopard didn't like plays unless he was the hero of them.

'The other inhabitants of the island had been shocked when the leopard jumped over the wall. They said that this was really not at all the right way to behave, that the leopard ought to know better and that he mustn't do it again. Also they counted their clubs and their cudgels more carefully than before, and even looked up some old sporting rifles which were covered with rust.

'But as time went on they got used to the idea of the leopard owning the garden. It wasn't their business to turn him out, and in any case he had been cordially welcomed by the inhabitants who had only themselves to blame. And when the Warmongers and the Jitterbugs said "Look out! He'll do it again", they answered "Nonsense. He has promised us not to".

'Adjoining the garden lay some fields. The soil was fertile, the farmers were industrious. Walking about on the garden wall the leopard looked down on these fields

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and found the prospect inviting. It was not long before he suggested that at least a part of these fields ought to be his. The farmers protested. They did not want to give up their fields for they loved them dearly. Then the leopard growling terribly, crouched in order to spring. But the farmers cried to the other inhabitants of the island, "Are you going to allow this animal to eat us up?" There were some who said it would be a crime, but there were others who believed it could all be settled in a friendly and reasonable way. So they went to the foot of the wall and began to argue with the leopard who assured them that he wanted only quite a small part of the farmers' fields. "But if we give him so much", said the farmers, "what is to prevent him from taking the rest?" Then the other inhabitants solemnly promised that if the farmers agreed to give up what was asked for, they — the other inhabitants — would prevent him from taking the rest. And the leopard added his promise to theirs, not only swearing that he wanted no more than he asked for but volunteering the information that he wouldn't take the rest as a gift.

'So the farmers, seeing that no one would help them, gave up that part of their fields with heavy hearts. The other islanders congratulated themselves on a wonderful settlement. They said that the farmers would be happier than ever before, that the golden age was certainly coming and they condemned the Warmongers and the Jitterbugs who continued to say that a crime had been committed and that the leopard would do it again.

'Then one morning while the other islanders were still dreaming of the golden age, the leopard did it again.

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He pounced upon all that was left of those fields and began to treat those farmers in a manner that was abominable to behold.

'The other islanders rubbed their eyes on awakening. Could it be possible that the leopard had broken his word? They were bitterly disappointed. They were also somewhat afraid. So they decided that bounds must be set to the leopard's activities, and they began to build a high fence all round the land that he occupied and they covered the fence with barbed wire.

'Then the leopard started to howl most pathetically. He protested that they were encircling him and that it wasn't fair. The other islanders said they were doing nothing of the sort. But the Warmongers and the Jitterbugs thought it was time to tell the leopard the truth. They argued that he had eyes in his head and it was no good telling him you weren't building a fence when he could see that you were. They proposed therefore to say to him frankly — "O Leopard, you have done very ill. You have stolen and murdered and you have broken your word. Yet, even so, we do not seek to destroy you, and the fence that we build cannot harm you unless in your folly you hurl yourself against the wire. If you can show good reason why the fence should run differently here, or why there should be a gap in it there, we are ever ready patiently to consider your case. But we can no longer believe in your promises and we will no longer give in to your threats. While it is true that we are building this fence, it is you and you only who have caused it to be built.'

During the month of June the Far Eastern Problem assumed a more serious aspect owing to the indignities

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to which British subjects were being exposed. Englishmen not unnaturally resent insults from an oriental race more deeply than from their fellow Europeans and there was a possibility of public feeling becoming so strong as to urge the Government to take measures against Japan that might have produced an outbreak in the Far East before the situation in Europe was sufficiently assured to enable us to deal with it with a free hand. It seemed to me that the important point was to treat all these problems as one and not to be led astray by an incident, however unpleasant, into weakening our forces in the principal theatre of affairs. We had to make it plain that we were prepared to defend our interests and our honour, but that we were not, like a bull in the arena, willing to charge wherever the red rag was waved in our eyes.

* * * *

‘When the Prime Minister introduced compulsory military service in spite of his undertaking not to do so in peace time, he rightly justified his action by asserting that the period through which we are passing cannot accurately be described as a time of peace. We have seen in recent years treaties broken, armies marching, frontiers overthrown, independent nations destroyed, force everywhere triumphant. We are in fact the living witnesses of the Second World War.

‘It has been called the white or bloodless war and it is true that little English blood has yet been shed in it. Yet blood has flown — rivers of blood in Abyssinia and Spain, oceans of blood in China and, perhaps most ghastly of all, the daily trickle of blood that oozes from the concentration camps of Germany.

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'No greater mistake could be committed than to consider any of these phenomena in isolation. Civil war in Spain, Italian aggression in Africa, Japanese aggression in Asia, tyranny based on torture in Germany — all these grim facts are not fortuitous and separate, but they are linked together and form the parts of one tremendous whole. It is only by so regarding them that we can hope to form a just estimate of their significance.

'Public attention is centred for the moment upon what is passing in Tientsin. It is natural that it should be, for Tientsin is temporarily the principal scene of operations. But we shall not arrive at a just appreciation of the situation if we consider what is happening in China merely as an unfortunate incident which has arisen by chance as a result of the conflict between the two great yellow races.

'Both the significance and the importance of what is happening in the Far East can only be properly understood and measured if considered in the light of what is happening in Europe, just as in the last war events at Baghdad or Salonica were dependent for their importance upon what was taking place on the Western Front.

'Deep anger is naturally felt in Great Britain at the news that reaches us from China. It is not pleasant to read of white men being stripped naked in public before a crowd of jeering Japanese and in the presence of Chinese women and children who once regarded the white races as the lords of creation. It is still less pleasant to read that of the many European nations represented at Tientsin it is only the British who are selected for these vile indignities. And it is impossible to believe that they

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would be so selected unless Japan were convinced that she is now in a position to insult Great Britain with impunity.

'Whence has she derived this dangerous conviction? There can be little doubt that the bonds which hold Japan and Germany together have recently been both strengthened and tightened. Germany is an insistent and a clamant friend.

'The Italian people — if not the Italian Government — are already growing restive under this embarrassingly possessive form of friendship. But to the Japanese it is more recent, and distance lends enchantment to the view that the Jap takes of his German ally. Both for the Japanese and Italians, headquarters are in Berlin.

'The German has undoubtedly been telling the Japanese what the German himself unfortunately believes — namely, that whatever the British Government may say they will in no circumstances be prepared to fight. It is this erroneous conviction which at the present time constitutes the greatest menace to the peace of the world. It should be the main object of our policy, therefore, to dispel this conviction.

'We have given sufficient proof of our desire for peace. No sane man in any country doubts it. Proof should now be given both of our preparedness and of our willingness, in certain circumstances, to face the fearful alternative.

'Until we can bring this knowledge home to those responsible for Japanese policy we can hope for nothing in the Far East but a continuance of humiliations. It was recently reported in the Japanese Press that His Majesty's Ambassador in Tokyo had visited the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs in order to plead for mercy.

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The absurd story was, of course, contradicted by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons. But the Japanese people do not read Hansard, and they believe what they are told. The young Japanese officer, who plays such an unduly important part in Japanese politics, will read it and will be encouraged in his arrogance to commit further outrages. And he may go too far.

‘Before he does so it is imperative that full warning should be given of what the result may be. Of this there can be no doubt. Where doubt and difficulty arise is when we come to consider of what nature the warning should be.

‘What is desired is obviously to produce the maximum effect upon the mind of Japan. What is to be avoided is any action that would weaken our position on the main front. Europe is the main front in the Second World War as it was in the First. The temptation to deflect excessive force into sideshows is one to which we have too often yielded in our long history.

‘If, therefore, we approach the consideration of this problem from the right angle it becomes at once apparent that the solution of it should be consigned not to the Foreign Office, nor to the Cabinet, but to the Chiefs of Staff. It is not, in the first instance, a diplomatic nor a political, but a military problem.

‘The Chiefs of Staff Committee have doubtless already had the matter before them and have reported to the Committee of Imperial Defence. But in the light of recent developments in foreign policy it is no longer a matter which this country alone should decide. We now have definite military obligations to other countries and it would seem therefore only logical to consult the

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Governments of those countries before any action is taken of strategic importance.

'We may be sure that consultation takes place at very frequent intervals between Germany, Italy and Japan. If we are to contend successfully, we must adopt similar measures. By giving commitments and seeking allies we have incurred, rightly incurred, certain dangers. We have also added to our advantages by increasing our sources of strength. Having incurred the dangers, let us reap the advantages, and let our General Staff combine with those of our allies in planning the campaign upon which our future depends.'

The following week I returned to the question of Russia in an article to which the editor of the *Evening Standard* attached the title, 'Russia Is the Ally Britain Needs'. It was not the title I had chosen. Nor did it accurately convey what was in my mind. I should have preferred to have called it 'Who Is On My Side? Who?' as what I most desired to impress on my readers was not that Russia was the heaven-sent ally whom Britain most particularly needed, but rather that Britain needed any ally she could get.

'When a man is attacked on a dark night by a couple of gangsters and there comes round the corner a powerful-looking individual, who seems inclined to render assistance, the man who is so attacked will not pause to inquire whether his potential ally is a Roman Catholic or a Plymouth Brother, nor even will he insist on testing his muscles before accepting his help.

'There is among certain sections of the Conservative Party great reluctance at the present time to enter into the proposed agreement with the Union of Socialist

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Soviet Republics. It is to be hoped that no reflection of that reluctance has made itself felt in high places and has caused the delays which have at last aroused suspicions in Russia as to the sincerity of Great Britain's desire for an agreement.

'It is perhaps not unnatural that Great Britain should take more than twice as long as the Soviet to answer diplomatic notes, for the ways of a Democracy are ever more deliberate than those of a Dictator, but it is equally not unnatural that such methods should awaken suspicion in a country whose possible co-operation has so long been ignored and who was completely neglected, during the momentous days of Munich.

'Those who regard the proposed alliance with dislike are actuated first by fear of Communism and secondly by doubts of Russia's efficiency. This, however, is no time to talk of ideologies. Since the days when Francis I, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, made an alliance with the infidel Turk, statesmen have never allowed religion or philosophy to interfere with the practical necessities of the international situation.

'The word "ideology", which has recently come into fashion, seems to stand for a set of ideas too worldly to be called a religion and too foolish to be called a philosophy, but having the defects of both, for it leads to fanaticism on the one hand and to smug complacency on the other.

'Because Communism was first in the field, those who dread it have come to believe that Fascism is something very different and there are even some ignorant people who think that Fascism is a Conservative and not a revolutionary force. In point of fact, there is very little difference between the Socialism of Berlin and that of

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Moscow. Moscow, however, is non-aggressive. During more than twenty years, the U.S.S.R. have not attempted to swallow up any smaller countries and are not now threatening to do so, and their propaganda abroad has steadily diminished and is now almost negligible. In a far shorter period, Germany has broken every treaty by which she was bound, has trampled upon a free and independent republic and is now a source of hourly apprehension to all her neighbours.

‘It was said not long ago that where Nazism differed from Communism was that Nazism worked and Communism did not. This appears to me a very good reason for regarding Nazism with greater distrust and dislike than Communism. The gun that goes off is more dangerous than the one that does not.

‘This, however, brings us to the second reason for criticizing the desirability of an understanding with Russia — namely, that such help as Russia could give in an emergency would prove disappointing. There are many contradictory reports with regard to the efficiency of Russian armaments, and we are all inclined to select those which support our own opinions. The truth is that nobody knows the whole truth. But there are some facts which cannot be denied.

‘First, there is within the orbit controlled from Moscow a population of over 160,000,000 people. Secondly, the Russians have throughout their history proved themselves formidable fighters. Thirdly, in the last war, despite great inefficiency, corruption and lack of armaments, the assistance of Russia more than once saved the Allies from disaster. Fourthly, the German Government are busily occupied in endeavouring to come to some agreement

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with the U.S.S.R. in order to be sure of Russia's neutrality in an emergency.

'These facts alone seem to state an unanswerable case in favour of concluding with all speed the agreement with Russia. These facts alone should be sufficient to dispel the fears of those who are trembling lest the wicked Communists should take away some of their precious property. These facts alone will be remembered if, through mishandling or delay, the opportunity to reach an agreement is allowed to escape. The time is short, the danger is very great, and this particular issue may be decisive.

'When Jehu came to Jezreel, he was fighting for his life, and he did not waste time in bandying words with Jezebel, or in inquiring what were the political opinions of those who surrounded her. He cried out: "Who is on my side? Who?" and when he knew, he ordered them to throw her down from the window, and so completed his victory.

'For too long have we hesitated to find out who are our friends — for too long have we sought to appease our enemies. Proof has been given that their appetite grows by feeding and that nothing less than world hegemony will satisfy their desires. The language of reason is wasted upon them; assurances of friendship they mistake for fear; invitations to conference they disdain to answer.

'One thing only can affect them now — the presentation of armed force and the determination to use it.

'The larger that force the greater the effect will be. The weight that will be added to it by the adherence of Russia might prove just sufficient to turn the scales in favour of peace, for there is no other way of avoiding the war than

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by convincing the Germans that they will certainly lose it.'

The statement in this article that the U.S.S.R. had made no attempt to swallow up smaller countries was perhaps hardly accurate in view of Russia's earlier activities both in Finland and Poland. But it was certainly true to say at the time the article was written that Russia was not and had not been for many years an aggressive Power, and while it was natural for the Baltic States to retain their apprehensions it could not be said that Russia was then the cause of the world's uneasiness.

The need of impressing the true facts of the situation upon those responsible for the direction of policy in Germany became ever more urgent as the summer went on and as fresh evidence came forward of the ignorance in which they were being kept. The following article was published on July 11th, and many of the steps which it recommended were subsequently taken. The Fleet was practically mobilized at the beginning of August and in the last days of July there were given spectacular demonstrations of the strength and efficiency of our Air Force by the performance of large scale flights over France. Most interesting also was the independent effort of Commander Stephen King-Hall to get the truth into the homes of the German people, and most significant was the violent reaction of Dr. Goebbels, who betrayed by the vituperative and obscene terms of his reply the fact that he fears the truth more than any weapon in the whole world's armoury.

* * * *

'It is curious that in a world where communication has become so rapid and so easy it should be so difficult to convey the truth from one nation to another.

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'The preservation of peace may now depend upon whether or no we can convey two simple facts to the rulers and people of Germany. The first of these facts is that in certain circumstances Great Britain will go to war; the second fact is that no reason exists why those circumstances should ever arise.

'We have recently created a new department of propaganda. The first thing that that department has to decide is not how best they can propagate their ideas but exactly what ideas they desire to propagate.

'According to all the information available doubt still exists in the highest quarters in Germany as to Great Britain's power and willingness to fight in any circumstances. Foolish as such doubt may seem, we cannot be wholly astonished at its existence. When Hitler marched into the Rhineland, thus violating the treaty which he had sworn to observe, many of his wisest counsellors warned him of the dangers he was incurring in case England and France should show their resentment by an appeal to arms.

'When he pounced upon Austria, the warning was repeated. When he made intolerable demands upon Czechoslovakia, it seemed at one moment that he had tried the patience of the Democracies too high. But the moment passed at Munich and when last March the crime was completed and the guaranteed frontier was obliterated, the criminals escaped with a protest and a mild reproach.

'For these reasons, and they are good reasons, Germany doubts our determination to fight. As a German said to me recently, "You will never convince me that a nation that would not fight for the Czechs will fight for

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the Poles!" We have got to convince him. The speech of Lord Halifax and the statement the Prime Minister made yesterday should have served this purpose, but deeds carry more conviction than words to the Teutonic mind. If these words could be followed by action, the proof would be complete. Many kinds of action suggest themselves. The mobilization of the Fleet is one; the holding of army manœuvres in France is another; the temporary transfer of part of our Air Force to the position they would occupy in war on the French frontier or elsewhere would be yet another. All that matters now is to carry conviction and to carry it without delay.

'Having proved that we are prepared to fight, the next and equally important point is to prove that there is no need for fighting. To do this, we must persuade the German people that they have nothing to fear from the Democracies.

'The majority of decent Germans loathe the hideous Nazi regime of tyranny based on torture, but there are two things which they fear more. First, they fear the Red Terror of Communism; secondly, they fear national defeat and humiliation and another Treaty of Versailles.

'The Nazi blackmail is based on the threat that Communism is the only alternative. This is not true, but unfortunately, much of the secret propaganda carried on in Germany to-day is of Communist origin, and nearly all such propaganda comes from sources of the Left — Socialist or Liberal. Such propaganda partly defeats its own object because it strengthens the support from the Right, which the Nazi Revolution has received from the beginning and depends upon for its continuance.

'What is, above all, necessary at the present time is to

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make plain to the sensible, sane, sober and conservative forces in Germany that in a reconstructed Europe they will have full and equal opportunity with all other nations to share in the advantages which peace and prosperity will produce; that the raw materials of the earth shall be as much at their disposal as at the disposal of other countries; that their monetary system shall never again be allowed to undergo the collapse which followed on the last war; that if they have claims to put forward they will be listened to at the only place where such claims should ever be considered — namely, at the international conference table, and that under a wise, benevolent and enlightened regime, such as their own citizens can provide in the future as they have provided in the past, they can once more become a valuable and trusted partner in the advancement of civilization.

‘The word *propaganda* is not popular in this country, but there is no harm in it. It merely means *preaching the gospel* or *spreading the news*. The gospel we have to preach is a true gospel: the news we have to spread is good news. Money spent on advertising a bad article is money wasted but it is impossible to spend too much in advertising an article that is good. We do not yet know on what scale the new department under Lord Perth is going to operate. It should be on the largest scale possible. If by propaganda we can avert war, £100,000,000 spent on it will be well invested.

‘For ten years the Greeks besieged Troy. All their efforts to hammer down the walls by force proved ineffective. At last, to the subtle brain of Odysseus, there occurred an idea whereby strength could be overcome through cunning. He concealed himself and his

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companions in a wooden horse, which the Trojans themselves pulled into their own city. Out of that wooden horse came the destruction of Troy.

‘In nearly every German home to-day there is a wooden box — a radio set — the Trojan horse of the twentieth century. Through that ingenious apparatus we can bring home to the German people the truth which must prevail against the lies that their own rulers are telling them. Day after day, hour after hour, that truth should be told and repeated until it is believed. It is easier to persuade people of what is true than of what is false.

‘Nor should it be told only in Germany and in German. Let it be repeated in every European language to all those nations whose anxious eyes are fixed on London and whose willing ears will lend attention to what London has to say. Let that truth be told in a way that will appeal to the educated and the uneducated — to the old and to the young. Let it be shouted from the housetops and whispered in the cellar, so that there shall be no escape from it.

‘Truth may yet avert war. It is the only hope, and it is the last hope.’

The following week I turned aside for a moment from world affairs to deal with a matter of purely domestic interest. The matter is one of slight and ephemeral importance and the only reason why the article is reproduced is that given in the preface, namely, in order that the collection may be complete.

* * * *

‘It is to be hoped that the Bill now before Parliament for granting pensions to Members of the House of Commons will be dropped.

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‘During the course of the present Parliament Members have already increased their own salaries by 50 per cent. When that considerable increase was made it was generally understood that the figure of £600 a year was considered to be really necessary to meet expenses. It is now proposed to reduce that sum by £12 and to form a fund out of which ex-Members who are in need, or their dependents after their death, shall receive a pension.

‘In the ideal Socialistic State, no man will ever be in want, nor will any man have more than he requires. One of the main arguments of those who have no love for Socialism is that in such a State there would be no incentive to save. This would be bad for the character of the individual and for the prosperity of the State.

‘That a man should make some provision for his own future — thereby exercising the virtues of prudence and foresight — is one of the basic principles on which our civilization has developed. It is surely, therefore, desirable that prudence and foresight should be practised by those who occupy leading or representative positions in the country.

‘There are, of course, misfortunes which the greatest prudence cannot foresee, and there are cases where men, through no fault of their own, fall upon evil times in the evening of their life. Such cases are not confined to the poorer classes of the population.

‘Another objection which many of us feel to Socialism is that there is no place for charity in the ideal socialistic State. Socialism, indeed, abhors charity as Nature abhors a vacuum. No better object for charity exists than those who have lived worthily, and through circumstances they could not control find themselves in need,

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and it is only false pride which considers the receipt of such charity to be degrading, for true charity, like mercy, should be twice blessed, blessing both him who gives and him who takes.

'In all walks of life, from the earliest times, friends have gathered round to assist those who are in trouble and have thought no worse of them for needing assistance. Those who are too proud to accept such assistance will presumably be too proud to apply for pensions under the present scheme, because one of the conditions for receiving such a pension is that very means test which has proved so unpopular in connection with the distribution of unemployment benefit. A man who blushes to ask his friends for help will presumably blush to parade his misery before a committee of investigation.

'For these reasons the principle of the Bill seems to many to be unsound. The details of it, as pointed out in the debate last week, are open to criticism and such criticism as was made was met by the Prime Minister with the rejoinder that this was at present the only scheme in existence, and therefore, although it might not be perfect, it was better than nothing. That so powerful an advocate was driven to adopt so feeble a defence indicates the essential weakness of the present scheme.

'The first reading of the Bill was carried in a depleted House by a majority of 105, and this was the result of what is termed a "free vote", that is to say, the Government Whips did not officiate. It would, however, be impossible to maintain that voting was in any sense of the word "free".

'Before the Bill came before the House those who had

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expressed themselves as most strongly opposed to it when it came up as a Private Member's Motion in February were interviewed by the Prime Minister, with the result that they agreed not to vote against the measure. In the debate, which lasted for three and a half hours, the Prime Minister himself took the most unusual course of speaking twice, and concluded by expressing the hope that the Bill would be carried by a substantial majority.

'When the Headmaster informs the assembled school that the boys may please themselves with regard to a particular matter, but that he himself very much hopes that they will take a certain line, nobody remains under the impression that he is entirely free to follow his own inclinations. Yet in spite of the private pressure, and in spite of the public appeal, one hundred and twelve supporters of the National Government, including the Chairman of the Conservative Party and some half dozen Junior Ministers, voted against the Bill.

'Less than half as many Ministerialists voted in favour of it, nor is it any exaggeration to say that for every one who voted against it there was at least one other who would have liked to have done the same, but who abstained from voting.

'It may well be argued that this is a small matter, which concerns only Members of Parliament, and in which the general public take little interest. But the House of Commons is part of the Sovereign Body that rules Great Britain and the Colonial Empire, and the manner in which it conducts its own affairs is therefore a matter of national and imperial interest.

'For many reasons the credit of the House of Commons does not stand as high as it did. A majority of countries,

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which in imitation of Great Britain adopted parliamentary institutions, have already abandoned them. Rival systems of government appear to some eyes to work with greater speed and efficiency. At such a time nothing should be done which is likely to lower the House of Commons in the eyes of the public.

‘The programme of legislation is congested. Many desirable measures, many useful reforms, have had to be jettisoned because there has not been time to proceed with them. The days of the session are numbered, and it may well be asked whether they cannot be employed on matters of greater national importance.

‘The advocates of social reform and of an increase in old age pensions have witnessed during the last nine months an expenditure on armaments — both of time and of money — without parallel in our whole history. When they press their claims, they are told that there is neither time nor money to deal with them, and they have so far accepted the explanation with remarkable patience.

‘It will certainly not be an edifying spectacle if at a moment when peace and war are hanging in the balance, when catastrophe on a gigantic scale is menacing Europe, and when the future of civilization is at stake, the Members of the Mother of Parliaments consume precious hours in heated controversy concerning the pensions they are to pay to themselves.’

As the time approached for Parliament to rise grave doubts began to be expressed as to whether it was wise for the sovereign body to separate at a time of such anxious uncertainty. I did not myself believe that much was to be gained by the continual session of Parliament or even by its recall at a date earlier than that suggested,

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but I did feel what I had indeed felt ever since Munich, that some effort should be made to sink party differences in order to secure greater national unity. I therefore regretted not only the uncertainty that prevailed with regard to a General Election but the inspired message which came from headquarters to the effect that an Election would almost certainly be held in the course of the autumn.

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"This is the time of year when a large majority of the community are usually looking forward to throwing off their cares and enjoying a holiday. For weeks previously the rival claims and attractions of different places have been considered and finally a decision has been reached as to where for a short period most happiness is to be found, where mind and body can relax and where new strength can be recuperated for continuance in the battle of life.

"This year, however, although the claim for the holiday cannot be denied, it is not the thought of the holiday which is uppermost in the minds of those who are setting out on it. Over all plans for the future there broods a doubt.

"There are in fact two uncertainties which are present in our minds. The one is so gigantic that the other by the side of it looks mean and trivial. "Is there going to be a war?" is the first question. "Is there going to be an election?" is the second. If the answer to the first is in the affirmative, the second will not arise.

"Let us calmly collect the data and endeavour to give such answer as we can to both.

"Ninety-nine per cent of the population of every

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country do not want war. It seems on the face of it almost incredible that the will of this vast majority should not prevail. But can we say that the majority in favour of peace was any smaller in 1914?

‘It may, perhaps, be held that owing to the complete lack of experience of what world war meant and the lack of imagination as to what it was likely to mean, there may have been more people at that time — ambitious professional soldiers, greedy armament manufacturers, speculative politicians — who contemplated the disaster of war with greater equanimity than anybody can possibly do at the present time.

‘But making full allowance and over-allowance for the existence of such a state of mind in 1914, it would only reduce the percentage of those who did not want war from 99 to 90. And yet there was war. The great danger, which then proved fatal, and which still exists is not due to the wickedness, but to the folly of man.

‘I cannot believe in the criminal who could calmly decide that for his own ends he would initiate a world war, which would mean the sacrifice of millions of lives and the set back, if not the destruction, of civilization, but I can unfortunately believe in a man who, owing to ignorance of the true facts, and owing to an incorrect estimate of the true dangers, may think it possible to do just this or just that, although knowing that others will resent it, but believing their resentment will not be sufficient to lead them to take up arms to prevent it from being done.

‘Then, when the mistake has been made, when the resentment has been roused, when the arms have been taken up, it may be too late to go back.

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'The storm centre at the present moment is the Free City of Danzig. With regard to this particular question, there can no longer be the slightest excuse for any misapprehension of the position or failure to understand the attitude of Great Britain. Both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have made it abundantly clear that any interference with the status of that city, which the Poles consider a menace to their liberty, would be regarded by Great Britain as an act of war.

'In the face of such plain and categorical statements as our Ministers have made, it does indeed seem unthinkable that for the comparatively minor advantage that Germany could gain by altering the status of the City of Danzig, which is already under a German regime, the Government of that country would let loose a war on Europe.

'It is, however, possible that to compensate for such disappointment as he may possibly have incurred in one place, Herr Hitler will turn his attention to another and seek some alternative satisfaction both for himself and for his followers when he comes to address them at the conference at Nuremberg.

'There is a danger that by centering our attention too exclusively upon Danzig we may encourage him to look elsewhere, and perhaps it would be well to extend the warning that has been so plainly given and to emphasize the fact that any act of violence and aggression, no matter where committed, would produce the same reaction on the free peoples of the Democracies.

'It has been supposed that Herr Hitler feels it incumbent on him annually to present his followers at Nuremberg with fresh triumphs and fresh promises, but surely

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since he was last at Nuremberg he has done sufficient to satisfy the most ambitious; and what could he possibly say that would give more profound relief to the German people than an assurance that he is contemplating no further step that could possibly lead to international complications and that he is presenting them at last with the certainty of an assured peace, he himself being the one man in Europe who can indeed assure it.

‘If this were so, and if the war clouds rolled away in September, a General Election would come as a harmless anti-climax. If peace were assured, it would indeed matter little how much we quarrelled amongst ourselves at home, what was the issue or even what was the result. We could return to our party politics as safely as a crew of a liner that has escaped shipwreck can go back to deck quoits or a fancy dress ball.

‘But if neither the one thing nor the other happens — if war is temporarily averted and peace is not assured, if the strain and the anxiety are still continuing in the autumn as they exist now, then it does seem that the moment would be ill-chosen to stir up party strife, to intensify differences of opinion in this country and then expose those differences to the world, knowing as we do how foreign countries are apt to exaggerate them in their own minds and to mistake the strong words which we use in party conflict for the expression of feelings far deeper than those that really exist.

‘A distinguished Liberal writer recently protested against the Leader of the Liberal Party criticizing the Prime Minister, and he pointed out that unity was the supreme need of the country at the present time.

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‘Sharing that opinion, I would suggest that the maintenance of unity is not compatible with the prospect of a General Election. You cannot implore your enemy to hold his fire when at the same time you are preparing to give battle the day after to-morrow.

‘It would be a good thing if before the House rises the Prime Minister could discuss with the Leaders of the Opposition Parliamentary plans for the autumn and make an announcement to the House in order that one of the two uncertainties to which I have referred might be eliminated.

‘If the Leaders of the Opposition want a General Election, it would perhaps be wrong to deny it to them, but if they do not want it, it can hardly be right for the party which already possesses a completely satisfactory majority, which has hardly been affected by a large number of by-elections, to force the minorities to fight against their will.’

The last article that I published before the House rose was on the subject of disarmament.

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‘The most disturbing feature of a recent peace plan was the suggestion that this country should pay to Germany a sum of money larger than most war indemnities in return for a promise to disarm.

‘To the minds of certain people armaments are a bugbear—things evil in themselves, the causes of evil, designed by the Evil One and produced by those who are in league with him. If we can rid ourselves of armaments, so such people believe, all other evil things will disappear in their wake. It was partly this belief that brought our country into fearful danger; it was partly this belief that

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was the cause of the difficulties and the defeats of the last two years.

‘The only real evil about armaments is the cost of them. There is some compensation even for that evil because it is better that a man should be paid a decent wage for making something that may never be used, than that he should receive a dole for doing nothing. A battleship that never fires a shot in anger is not all waste of money. Not only has it provided well-paid labour for large numbers of men for many years, but it is also part of the premium we pay towards a policy of national insurance.

‘Armaments do not cause wars: they may prevent them.

‘Men have noticed that large increases in armaments have sometimes been followed by war, and falling into the obvious fallacy of thinking that because one event happens after another the first event must be the cause of the second — *post hoc propter hoc* — they have concluded that the wars were caused by the armaments.

‘It were as sensible to argue that umbrellas cause rain. When rain seems likely men equip themselves with umbrellas. The appearance of a large number of umbrellas is frequently followed by rain, but it is not the umbrellas that have caused the rain, it is the fear of rain that caused the umbrellas.

‘Similarly, when an increase in armaments is followed by war, it is not the armaments that cause the war but the fear of war that caused the armaments.

‘The mistake that many of our peace lovers made in the days of peace was that they hoped and strove to obtain peace through disarmament, and thus approached the

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problem from the wrong end. Peace cannot be achieved through disarmament, but disarmament can be achieved through peace. Get rid of the fear of war and armaments will get rid of themselves.

‘It will be the taxpayer not the pacifist, who will see to it. There will be no need of a disarmament conference nor of an agreement to disarm. But so long as the fear of war remains, every disarmament conference is doomed to failure and every agreement to disarm will be a sham and a fraud.

‘We should have learnt this lesson in the fifteen comparatively peaceful years that followed the war.

‘The Powers that won the war have been charged with a breach of faith because, having disarmed their defeated enemies, they failed to disarm themselves. In fact, no faith was broken because no promise was made.

‘Germany did not agree to disarm on the understanding that other Powers would follow suit. Germany was compelled to disarm because she had been defeated in the field, and had no choice.

‘The Allied Powers expressed in the Peace Treaty their intention to disarm, such being their honest intention at the time, but they entered into no obligation to do so. Great Britain did indeed carry out that intention to a dangerous extent, and was still disarming after Germany secretly and in breach of her treaty obligations was re-arming — a process that was well under way long before the Nazis attained power.

‘But no general agreement to disarm was ever concluded in spite of many sincere attempts to reach one, and the cause of failure was the presence of fear. We can still remember how in those days the French were some-

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times accused of being excessively apprehensive. It was easier for the English to feel confident so long as the German fleet was at the bottom of Scapa Flow, but the French knew that the German army was still on the other side of the Rhine, and how great was the supply of hidden armaments they could not tell.

‘If, therefore, no genuine disarmament agreement could be arrived at in the third decade of the century, what hope can there be for it in the fourth or the fifth?’

‘The suggestion of an agreement to disarm is not only a delusion — for Great Britain it is also a snare. Disarmament must be unilateral or universal. No nation can be expected willingly to accept unilateral disarmament, and therefore any such proposal must be upon a universal basis, that is to say it must aim at producing a measure of disarmament proportionately the same in all countries. The practical difficulties are enormous, but let us waive them for a moment and assume that by some miracle the practically impossible has been accomplished. Let us imagine — it is a considerable feat of the imagination — that all the armaments in the world had been reduced by exactly 50 per cent — that the Navy, Army and Air Force of Great Britain were just half as large and as powerful as they are at present, and that the three services of France, Germany and all other Powers had undergone a similar reduction. What would the effect be on the prospects of preserving peace? The answer is “nil”.

‘So long as the minds and policies of the Governments and the governed in the various countries were the same the situation would remain unaltered. The hope of victory and the fear of defeat would be neither increased

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nor diminished. So far as internal conditions are concerned, all that can be asserted is that while there might be less taxation, there would certainly be more unemployment.

‘Even, then, by making two very large assumptions — first, that a sound and fair disarmament agreement can be reached; secondly, that it will be properly and fairly carried out — even so, we see that little, if any, advance would have been made upon the path to peace. But what right have we to assume and what power have we to secure that such an agreement, if made, would ever be observed? The only method is to insist upon the principle of international inspection. But can we expect that in the state of mind that now unhappily prevails in Europe any sovereign Power will grant free access to a party of foreigners to all her munition factories and all her store houses? But without such access there can be no assurance that obligations are being carried out.

‘It is difficult to ascertain the simplest facts in a Totalitarian State where the slightest indiscretion may be punished with months of torture in a concentration camp, and where anything worse than indiscretion may lead to the headsman’s block.

‘We may, on the other hand, be only too sure that any undertaking to disarm entered into by this country would be fulfilled to the letter. Nor would it be necessary to receive foreign supervision, although we should probably agree to do so.

‘Our own inquisitive Members of Parliament might be trusted to scrutinize so closely the Service Estimates as not to admit of our spending a penny more on our defences than the disarmament agreement allowed.

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Such an agreement would manacle and fetter us while it left our potential enemies free.

‘Let us promote the methods of peace by every means in our power, but never let us again in folly and haste lay aside the weapons of war.’

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ON August 2nd an acrimonious debate took place in the House of Commons on the subject of the adjournment. Some Members felt that it was wrong for Parliament to announce at such a critical moment its intention of not meeting again for two months. The Labour Opposition suggested that August 21st should be the date of our next meeting instead of October 3rd. The Liberals preferred August 22nd. As events turned out the House met again on August 24th.

Personally as I listened to the debate and had some sympathy with the arguments of Mr. Churchill, Mr. Amery and others in favour of an earlier meeting, I felt so convinced that events would decide when the next meeting must be rather than the will of the Government or any resolution passed by the House of Commons, that it seemed to matter little what date was decided upon that afternoon.

I left for the country before the House divided, devoutly hoping that I might not return to it before October 3rd. I had the impression as I travelled away from London that the majority of my fellow members still failed to appreciate the gravity of the situation and that in so failing they were truly representative of their constituents. I could not forget at such a time the events that had taken place just a year ago and it was in such a mood that I wrote my next article.

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'Men like to set forth upon their holiday in a spirit of hope and confidence, for it must be a poor holiday indeed if care and anxiety come as companions. Therefore it should surprise nobody if, when the House of Commons rose last week, there was prevalent among members a mood of determined optimism. Those who raised doubts as to the wisdom of separating at so grave a moment of international tension were as unpopular as the children who prophesy rain on the morning of the annual school treat.

'But now that this eventful parliamentary year is over, for the parliamentary year really ends in the summer although there remains a little sweeping up to be done in the autumn before the House can be opened for the new session, it is almost inevitable that we should compare the situation as it exists to-day with the situation that existed a year ago.

'Let us first examine the similarities between the two situations. We are still ruled by the same Government. One or two offices have changed hands, one or two Ministers have vacated their positions and one or two new Ministers have been selected, principally owing to their technical qualifications. But the Big Four who were mainly responsible for the direction of policy last August and September remain in the same posts as they then occupied.

'There have been certain not unimportant diplomatic changes, but the key position, that of our embassy in Berlin, is still held by the Ambassador whose advice carried most weight with the Government last September, and who is generally believed to hold the same views as he then held.

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'There is also considerable similarity between the present international situation and that which then existed. Then as now, there was a feeling of optimism in Great Britain. It was based on nothing more substantial than the fact that Germany had committed no act of violent aggression since the absorption of Austria in the middle of March. There had been alarms in May but nothing had happened, and if nothing happens over a certain period of time, Englishmen are always willing to believe that nothing will ever happen again.

'This year in the same way, nothing has happened since the destruction of Czechoslovakia in the middle of March — except the destruction of Albania at the beginning of April — and once more the invincible — or perhaps we should say the incurable — optimism of our race is asserting itself, fortified by the Prime Minister's assurance that the country is now ready for any emergency.

'Yet then, as now, there was one outstanding issue in Europe about which two conflicting views seemed incapable of reconciliation. Then it was the Sudetenland, to-day it is Danzig. Then the Germans said, "The Sudetenland must belong to us", to which the Czechs replied, "If we give it up we forfeit our independence". To-day the Germans are saying, much more openly and much more often, "Danzig must belong to us" — to which the Poles make the similar reply that if they lose all hold on Danzig their independence is gone. They have the authority of Frederick the Great for believing that he who holds Danzig rules Poland, and they have the fearful example of Czechoslovakia to warn them against the danger of compromise.

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'A further similarity between the two situations is that now, as then, Germany is rapidly mobilizing her armed forces.

'There is, however, one great difference which distinguishes this August from last. A year ago our hands were free so far as the particular issue was concerned. It is true that we had sent one of our most distinguished elder statesmen to Czechoslovakia on a special mission and had thereby shown our interest and goodwill. It was perhaps natural that the people of Czechoslovakia should hope that Great Britain, having shown interest and friendship, would not allow their country first to be dismembered and then destroyed. But Great Britain was in no way committed. She had given no word and she broke no faith.

'All that is changed to-day. Great Britain is committed up to the hilt. The situation could not be stated more concisely than it was in a leading article in *The Times* last week. "We fight if the national independence of Poland is threatened; and of that Poland is to be the judge." Never before in our history have we left in the hands of one of the smaller Powers the decision whether or not Great Britain goes to war. But there the decision rests to-day, with a handful of men whose very names, with the possible exception of Colonel Beck, are unknown to the people of this country. Those unknown men can decide that the European war shall begin to-morrow.

'I do not say that the Government were wrong to give the guarantee to Poland despite the danger that has arisen from it. I believe that they were right to do it, as they have been right to do many dangerous and in themselves undesirable things during the last ten months.

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All these decisions, taken as they have been with reluctance and delay, are part of the evil heritage of Munich. I believed that the policy of Munich was wrong at the time, and I said so. It is part of the logical sequence of events that followed upon the adoption of that policy that we who might have fought for the Czechs on our own conditions and at our own time are now obliged to fight for the Poles whenever they choose to give the signal.

'But I shall be reminded that during the interval our preparations for war have improved enormously. I gladly acknowledge the fact. There is however a danger that those who were over pessimistic ten months ago may be over optimistic to-day.

'So far as the Navy is concerned, there has been little alteration. The construction programme has proceeded according to plan. There has been no acceleration. We have nine capital ships building, but we have not one more capital ship in commission than we had a year ago.

'So far as the Army is concerned, great decisions have been taken but we must not fall into the delusion of believing that armies can be created by a stroke of the pen. Also the decisions were taken late. I said in the House of Commons when I resigned from the Government last October, that the policy of Munich must entail the construction of an army on a continental basis. Yet it was not until after the rape of Prague in March that the Government decided to double the Territorial Army and it was not until after the rape of Albania in April that the Government decided to introduce a measure of compulsory service. Both these decisions were good but nobody can pretend that taken together they go a tenth of the way to make up for the thirty-five Czech divisions,

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admirably equipped and trained, ready to fight to the death who to-day are disarmed and disbanded.

‘Meanwhile the German troops whose training was then believed to be deficient have had a year in which to improve it — and a year has been spent on the consolidation of the Siegfried line which was then considered far from impregnable.

‘Our greatest advance has been made in the air, where, according to all information, progress has been truly astonishing. But here again it would be folly to suppose that the enemy have stood still. They also have been training pilots and turning out machines unhampered by any regulations limiting the hours of labour — and great as our achievement may have been it would be rash to assume that theirs has been in any way inferior.

‘But the greatest asset gained by Germany, in the interval, is the redoubled confidence felt in the Führer who since a year ago has proved for the fourth and fifth time his ability to win victories without bloodshed.

‘These are the facts of the situation which confront us at the opening of our dangerous holiday.’

The first three weeks of August were uneventful and for want of a better subject I returned to the notorious letter of Dr. Goebbels, believing that the wider publicity it received the better. Between the writing of the article, however, and the date of its publication Commander King-Hall arranged for the letter to be printed in full in the *Daily Telegraph* and the editor of the *Evening Standard* therefore decided not to print my article. I insert it here in order that the collection may be complete and in order that the letter which formed the subject of it should not be forgotten.

‘The importance of propaganda is being increasingly understood by all who are concerned with the improvement of international relations. The fate of the world in these fateful days must ultimately be determined by the minds of men. It is therefore of the first importance that those minds should have every opportunity of learning true facts and forming sound judgments. If in every country there were a free Press, little if any need of the methods of propaganda would exist. Unfortunately the Press is completely free in hardly any country. Even here the law of libel and the apprehensions of news-vendors seem likely to impose an unofficial censorship, and throughout the greater part of the continent of Europe, not only are native newspapers forbidden to print anything unfavourable to the Government but the circulation of foreign newspapers is not permitted.

‘One of the more curious phenomena of the age is the development of the “News Letter”, which purports to give more accurate information than the ordinary Press. In the present year as many as a dozen of these have been brought to my notice. Some have been born and passed away during that period, others appear to enjoy increasing prosperity.

‘A remarkable document is at present being circulated in this country. It is posted from Berlin to a large number of private individuals. I have received a copy myself, as have several of my constituents, some of whom have asked me whether I believe it to be genuine. It is headed “*The Reply to English Propaganda* by Reich Minister Dr. Goebbels”, and it is dated July 14th. As the distribution of it has now been continuing for some time but no official denial of its authenticity has been issued, it is fair to

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assume that it is indeed what it purports to be, namely a reply by the eminent German statesman to a letter which Commander Stephen King-Hall has been circulating in Germany. This being so, the document is one of historical importance as a revelation of the type of mind that is now assisting in the government of Germany and also of the conditions prevailing in that country. It was said before the War that the Prussian Civil Service was the finest in the world, and the first thing that strikes the reader of this document is that Dr. Goebbels should not have available some assistant who is capable of writing correct English. The language of the letter throughout would bring discredit upon anybody who had passed through an English secondary school, and there are some sentences which convey no meaning at all. For instance: "It does not mean that this childish and absurd school-boy bit of propaganda need necessarily be regarded as less pronounced". And again: "You then go on and put a somewhat scurrilous question to your German reader 'Why do I write to you?' " What meaning Dr. Goebbels attaches to the word "scurrilous" we cannot tell but no meaning which he would find in any dictionary could possibly make it applicable to the question that he quotes.

'Ignorance of foreign languages does not necessarily connote any lack of culture and there is no reason at all why Dr. Goebbels or any other German politician should be expected to know English, but even through a translation the bad writing of the original can sometimes be apparent and such sentences as the following cannot be the fault only of the translator. "Your news service is 'a privately directed public service'. Ha, ha,

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ha! That really was well said. Your chief, Lord Halifax, can certainly be well satisfied with your schoolboy efforts."

'Dr. Goebbels is anxious to show that Commander Stephen King-Hall is a person of no importance and makes great use of the fact that although he is standing for Parliament, he has not at present been elected. "Mr. Candidate-for-Parliament" is the phrase that occurs more than once. Yet he makes the definite statement, which I believe to be wholly untrue, that the Commander is employed by the Foreign Office and that his letter was written with the help of the Foreign Secretary. If the statement were true, it would obviously give greater importance to Commander Stephen King-Hall, which appears to be exactly what Dr. Goebbels does not wish to do. The fact that a highly placed minister in a foreign country should make a personal attack upon the British Foreign Secretary is in itself significant.

"The first charge which Dr. Goebbels brings against Commander King-Hall is that of having served in the Navy, which in the last war "carried out a starvation blockade against Germany". It is suggested that such methods of warfare are inhuman. This is the first time perhaps that high authority has been given to the view that the method of siege is not one that should be employed in warfare. Throughout the history of war, it has always been held that to besiege either a citadel or a country, in spite of the suffering that it must cause, is a perfectly legitimate act of war. That Dr. Goebbels takes another view is interesting — the more so when we remember that this very weapon was used by Germany in the last war and in the year 1917 came nearer to bringing

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her victory than all the efforts of her land forces and her surface ships put together. The U-boat campaign in 1917 came within measurable distance of starving England out of the war, and we must be surprised to learn that Dr. Goebbels considers such methods unworthy of the Royal Navy.

'The next charge that is brought against Commander King-Hall is that he is deliberately engaged in propaganda. "Mr. Paid-Propagandist" and "Mr. Propaganda Candidate" are the terms used. Now propaganda may or may not be desirable and those who are actively engaged in spreading it may or may not be worthy of abuse, but surely the one person in Europe who should not abuse them is the man whose present office is that of Minister of Propaganda. £20,000,000 annually, we are informed, are spent on propaganda by the Third Reich, and Dr. Goebbels is the head of the department which is in charge of these activities. For him, therefore, to sneer at propaganda itself is hardly logical.

'Dr. Goebbels then goes on to chronicle the crimes of Great Britain, referring to the alleged fact that in the year 1771 Liverpool was the centre of the slave trade. It is difficult to understand what relevance such statements can have or how they can affect the present problem of Great Britain's relations with Germany.

'The remainder of the pamphlet is confined to abuse. There is no argument in it, no attempt to explain difficulties or to suggest remedies, but a series of threats and sneers covering eight pages.

'I have not myself had the advantage of reading the letter which Commander King-Hall addressed to the German public but such a method of conveying the

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British point of view to the citizens of a country where the freedom of the Press has been abolished would appear to be perfectly legitimate and the fury that it has roused in the breast of Dr. Goebbels seems alone sufficient justification. A similar publication, entitled *News From Germany*, which gives the Nazi point of view, has long been circulated in England and is sent to many thousands of individuals who do not subscribe to it. One of the activities of the "Link" — that association which has recently been so sternly denounced by the Home Secretary — has been to promote the circulation of this periodical, and I doubt whether any harm has been done by it. Both Germany and Italy have arranged for broadcasts to take place in English, expressing the points of view held in their respective countries. Here we shall always be glad to listen to such broadcasts as we are only anxious to learn exactly what those points of view are. That a similar effort to convey what we are thinking and feeling to the German people should provoke such an outburst of anger and should induce one of the most prominent figures in the state himself to indulge in a violent and intemperate reply proves that the present Government of Germany are most anxious to prevent their people from establishing any contact with the outside world. Commander King-Hall can hardly have expected such spectacular success as he has achieved. He will no doubt continue his efforts and they can only be useful.

'So far as propaganda outside Germany is concerned, we can have no more useful agent than Dr. Goebbels himself. If only this letter could be translated into other languages as badly as it has been translated into English

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and circulated throughout the world, it would provide an irrefutable proof of the state of mind and culture that now prevails among those who govern what was once a great civilized people.'

I was invited to broadcast on August 15th to the United States and the subject of my address was to be the international situation. It seemed a suitable opportunity for stating the issue that lay before Europe in its broadest aspect. This I attempted to do and at the risk of wearying the reader by a repetition of much that has appeared before I include the address here as it was delivered in the belief that it is a true and a fair statement of the case.

'To those who are watching European affairs from the other side of the Atlantic much that happens here must seem difficult to understand. We cannot grumble if others fail to understand us because we find great difficulty in understanding ourselves. I want to-night to state the issue — the broad issue as I believe it to be.

'Properly to appreciate the meaning of a picture and to understand the effect that the artist wishes to convey, you must stand at some distance from it and see it as a whole — and must not allow your attention to be diverted by any of the details, however striking they may appear. When you have seen the whole then you can study the details — but not before. The details in this case are names of places. Last year they were Austria — Czechoslovakia . . . this year they were Prague — Memel — Albania . . . now they are Danzig — Hungary — Roumania. Each one of them presents, or has presented, a problem worthy of attention, but each one of them is only a small part of a great whole — and we cannot

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really understand the meaning of the part until we have grasped the meaning of the whole.

“There are a few facts of which I must remind you, because if we forget them — and it is extraordinary how easily people do forget them — we come to entirely false conclusions. The first fact to remember is that six years ago there was a revolution in Germany which was one of the most important revolutions that has ever taken place. Since that time Germany has been subjected to the will of a single man. Before he acquired power that man wrote a book in which he told us exactly what he meant to do. He meant to unite the whole of Europe under German domination and he meant to destroy France. He thought that Great Britain might be persuaded to stand aside and watch him with benevolent neutrality while he carried out his plan. There he was wrong. If he had studied history he would have known that it has always been England’s policy and always will be to prevent any single Power from dominating the continent of Europe — because England has always known that if she allowed every other Power in Europe to be dominated it would be her turn in the end. For this reason we fought against Philip II of Spain, against Louis XIV of France, against Napoleon Buonaparte and against Kaiser Wilhelm.

‘In the book that he wrote Herr Hitler told us very plainly what he meant to do. In one point only has he changed his programme. When he wrote the book he said he wanted no colonies overseas — now he is demanding the return of all the colonies which Germany possessed before the war. So that instead of diminishing his programme he has added to it.

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‘During these six years he has been busy carrying out his programme. The technique which he employs is worth studying. It varies very little. He strikes suddenly, without warning, but after very careful preparations — he presents the world with a *fait accompli* and at the same time an undertaking that he will not do it again. On every occasion hitherto the world, taken by surprise, seeing that it is too late to prevent him from doing what he had already done has regretfully, with murmurs and protests, accepted the situation and welcomed the assurance that it shall not happen again. Thus when he remilitarized the Rhineland he solemnly stated that he had no further territorial ambitions in Europe; when he subsequently took possession of Austria he authorized a definite guarantee to Czechoslovakia; when he took *part* of Czechoslovakia less than a year ago he said not only that he wouldn’t take, but that he didn’t want, the rest and when he took the rest, six months later, he refrained for the first time from giving any assurance as to the future, for he felt perhaps, for the first time, that an assurance would be an insult to our intelligence.

‘One other point is of importance to remember. Always Herr Hitler has refused to negotiate. After his first act of force — the military occupation of the Rhineland, Great Britain offered to negotiate in the hope of obtaining a complete settlement of all outstanding questions. Herr Hitler refused. He does not believe that he can get what he wants by negotiation. He is probably right, because he wants too much. Three times our Prime Minister went to visit him last year in Germany. Neither at Berchtesgaden nor at Godesberg did any negotiation take place. Each time the Prime Minister

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returned with an ultimatum. At Munich there was the pretence of negotiation but the settlement arrived at turned out worse for the Czechs than the ultimatum of Godesberg — and the tragedy ended at Prague.

‘So now the situation should be plain. The peace of the world depends upon the actions of a man who will not enter into negotiations and whose undertakings cannot be relied upon. He has set before himself a programme which cannot be accomplished without producing a war.

‘Is there then any hope? I believe that there is — but there is also great danger. And the survival of the hope depends upon a full understanding of the danger. It may seem incredible to you on the other side of the Atlantic — but it is none the less perfectly true that there are a great number of people here in Europe, here in England, who still fail to understand the simple but fearful problem by which we are faced. The mistake that they make is due to the error of which I warned you when I began — the error of concentrating attention on the part instead of on the whole. Last year they insisted on seeing it simply as a question of Czechoslovakia. This year they are inclined to consider it only as a question of Danzig. Czechoslovakia seemed a question that should be settled by compromise rather than by war. The same might certainly be said of Danzig. It would be true of both if they were isolated questions and could be settled in isolation. But in fact they are only parts of a far greater question — namely the domination of Europe — and about that question there can be no compromise. And until that question is settled every advantage that we give away must render its ultimate settlement more difficult. In the

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last war we might have said, "Is it really worth sacrificing so many lives for the sake of Ypres? a small town already in ruins" — the Americans might have said the same of Château Thierry — small places, in themselves of little importance but parts of a great line, links in a precious chain, the integrity of which meant victory or defeat.

"The first thing, therefore, that we have to do is to silence those voices over here which ask, "Is Danzig worth a war?" and make them understand that Danzig is not and will never be the real issue.

"There is an additional danger in talking so much about Danzig. It may give rise to the idea that it is only of Danzig that we are thinking — and that if Danzig is left alone we might be persuaded to close our eyes to some other act of violence in some other part of Europe. There are strong suspicions prevalent to-day that Herr Hitler may have altered the direction of his plans in a south-easterly direction, and it would be more satisfactory if a definite declaration had been made that Great Britain and France were no longer willing to tolerate any further act of aggression in Europe no matter against whom it was directed.

"If we can convince Herr Hitler that such an act will mean a European war I cannot believe he will commit it. But I do not know that he is convinced of that at present — and I am not sure that anybody has told him the truth. He is a remarkable man with a dynamic personality. It is not easy to tell the truth to such a man, if the truth is something that he does not want to hear. But the hope of the world depends upon persuading him of that truth, so that he shall never have to say when it is too late, "If only I had known!"

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'If he desires war he will certainly get it, but let it never be said that through our infirmity of purpose, or through our lack of clarity in statement we allowed him to blunder into a war that he never meant. He has done much for his country but if all his achievement is to end in war it would have been better for his country that he had never been born. The danger to-day, the fearful danger is, lest encouraged by the bloodless victories that he has won, and still unconvinced by our words or by our preparations, he should take just one step more and precipitate us all into the disaster which we must all — if we are sane — be longing to avoid.

'Let me sum up what I have said. Hitler seeks to dominate the continent of Europe. He has been allowed to go so far because the Governments of the Democracies failed to understand what he was trying to do. They accepted his assurances instead of reading his book. Now they know the truth they are quite determined to prevent him from dominating the continent of Europe — and they have the power to do so. If he can be convinced that they have both the will and the power, he may yet abandon his purpose. If he does so there will be peace — if he does not there will be war.'

The last article to be included in this collection is one that never appeared. It was set up in print on the night of August 21st and should have been published on the following morning. But late that night came the news that once again His Majesty's Government had been successfully outwitted. I had always been alive to the danger of the Soviet concluding an agreement with Germany behind the backs of the Democracies. In articles previously published (see pages 283 and 296-7) I had

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given warning that the danger existed. But as the months dragged on and the Government appeared to be free from any anxiety as to the course of negotiations, refrained from expediting them and refused, when asked, to send out an important Cabinet Minister to conduct them, it appeared to those of us who, like myself, had no access to special sources of information, that if the Government with the Diplomatic and Secret Services at their disposal were complacent there could be little cause for the private citizen to feel alarm. Yet even in this article I referred to a rumour that had reached me, and suggested that the danger had not yet passed away. It was in fact already too late to avert the great diplomatic defeat that Great Britain was about to sustain. What follows has a melancholy, if only an academic, interest.

* * * *

‘There is gradually being constructed in Europe a combine of nations which, when it is complete, may become the most formidable force in the world. The word “may” implies a condition. Extent of territory, numbers of population, supplies of raw material, stores of gold — all these will be in the possession of this international combine to an extent which no rival combine can command, but all these will prove insufficient without the previous preparation, organization and training which are necessary to ensure that the greatest possible advantage is derived from such overwhelming resources.

‘The first thing must be to ensure that the political foundations are solid. The difficulty of understanding the delay that still impedes the conclusion of the agreement with Russia increases with the length of it. A diplomatic formula is not always easy to find. It can explain

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a delay of days, it can excuse a delay of weeks, but it cannot seriously be put forward in extenuation of a delay of months. If in negotiation two countries mean anything like the same thing it must be possible to find the words to frame that meaning.

‘Those who are anxious to see the agreement concluded welcomed the decision to open staff conversations because it seemed to indicate that no further difficulties were likely to be encountered and that the agreement was in sight. Since however the decision was announced there appears to have been a slackening in the effort to reach the political understanding although the staff conversations continue. Now this procedure in any normal circumstances would be putting the cart before the horse in a manner likely to incur great risks. It is as though the lawyers of the two parties were instructed to draw up the marriage settlement before the lady had consented to wed. Not only would the lawyers be hampered by the feeling that they were acting in the dark, but also their zeal would be curbed by anxiety lest any indiscretion on their part might interfere with the far more important decision — not yet taken — upon which all their efforts were dependent.

‘In the same way the task of the distinguished naval, military and air officers who are now in Moscow must have been enormously complicated by the fact that they are still uncertain whether those with whom they are discussing matters of vital strategic importance are the representatives of a country which is shortly to be our ally, or not. I have it on good authority that the German Government recently imposed a veto on certain anti-Bolshevik cartoons in the Bavarian comic paper

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Simplicissimus. This proves that the Germans at any rate have not yet abandoned hope of obtaining the goodwill of the Soviet. The hope may be a faint one only, but so long as the slightest uncertainty exists as to the future policy of Russia the danger of carrying on intimate, confidential, negotiations with Russian officers on defence questions must be apparent.

‘Let us assume, however, that all eventually goes well and that the formidable Peace Front is finally established — and if it is to be really formidable Russia must be included — the question then arises what further measure will be necessary in order to ensure its full efficiency.

‘First it must be prepared for war. The years 1914 to 1918 should have taught us both the difficulty and the importance of co-operation. No time should now be lost in the co-ordination of battle plans. Not Great Britain, France and Russia only but their important allies, Poland, Turkey, Greece and Roumania should lose no time in getting together in order that all their resources may be pooled in a common effort. Exact information should be exchanged as to what weapons and materials each nation lacks and as to how the needs of one can be supplied out of the superfluities of others. Also it should now be possible to decide where, when the time comes, the great combine shall attack and where it shall stand on the defensive. A purely technical conference should be called at which all these countries should be represented for the purpose of exploring these questions and working out a plan of campaign. The best feature of the opening days of the last war was that the movements of our small army had been settled long before, in a time of peace that seemed far more durable than the present one, and that

the positions previously agreed upon were taken up with the maximum of rapidity and the minimum of friction. In those days France was our only certain ally in Europe and therefore it was only with France that we were concerned to make previous arrangements. Now we have many allies and they should all be consulted in order that they may all contribute towards the common end, for the value of their contributions must be multiplied many times if they are all co-ordinated in one scheme.

‘But if the great combine is to perform to the full the functions that fate may impose upon it and if it is to be worthy of the great responsibilities which are inseparable from its mighty power, it must prepare not for war only but also for peace.

‘Simultaneously with the conference suggested above which might be called the war conference another should also be held. Here plenipotentiaries of the same Powers should meet to discuss the future, peaceful settlement of the world. The discussions of this peace conference would be followed and their decisions awaited by the world with an interest and a respect very different from that which has been accorded these last twenty years to the confabulations of Geneva. The interest and respect would be due to the fact that behind all their pronouncements there would hover the enormous sanction of almost irresistible armed force.

‘It would be the first duty of this assembly to inquire what are the real causes which may lead to a breakdown of world peace. Having decided upon the causes it would remain to discover the cures — no easy task but not beyond the wit of wisest men. From these inquiries there should emerge a programme which should prove to the

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peoples of the world that it is possible for all of them to live in peace with one another and to share fairly in a new prosperity.

'The work of the Peace Front will not be completed, nor will it have earned its name until it produces the Peace Programme. The main purpose of that programme should be to solve the problem presented by Germany's demands. It should show how those demands — in so far as they are reasonable — can be met without encroachment on the property or the independence of her neighbours. It should ensure beyond the shadow of a doubt that the people of Germany in the future should have as good a life as the people of any other country. It must also ensure that the people of Czechoslovakia shall recover the freedom they have lost.

'The Great Charter of the Nations would be a kind of affirmation of faith in the reason of mankind. "Here", we could say to the Axis Powers, "is one alternative. The other is a world war. It is for you to choose. But we have put our offer upon record and it will be for future generations to decide whether it was just. If you reject it now, your blood will be upon your own heads."

'Such — as I conceive it — is the task that lies before us. It is an urgent task. It does not admit of taking holidays. While we relax others are increasing their activities and the storm may break before the task is undertaken.'

The storm broke while the article was being printed. The failure of the Democracies to secure the adhesion of Russia was catastrophic. I had said, perhaps too often, that the only way to prevent the war was to convince Germany that she would lose it. This was^r no

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longer possible when Germany was assured of Russian neutrality. Subsequent events proved it. Germany made no move until the agreement with the Soviet was both signed and ratified. When that was done she lost no time, for she felt then that the risk could be taken and pounced immediately upon Poland

So ended the period of unopposed aggression and bloodless victory. The second world war entered upon a new phase.



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